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THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

THE Rajk trial, now proceeding in Budapest, may be seen, in the first place, as another incident in the long social struggle which Hungarian revolutionaries have fought since the medieval landlords, on an historic occasion, roasted George Dozsa on an iron throne. But its significance for the world to-day is that it marks a new stage in the Communist plans for Eastern Europe. The more dramatic effects which have spot-lit Rajk's indictment and confession, the conjuring up of great international conspiracies, the lurid speculations of the defendant Brankov—talking no doubt to save his neck—and all the vituperative jargon of the prosecution, are now the accepted features of Communist governments. Rajk's downfall represents the triumph of those who believe that the Hungarian revolution—or any other—cannot be carried through unless the supremacy of the Soviet Union is absolute. The road that these revolutionaries have travelled is marked with every sort of suffering, betrayal, failure, and painful re-beginning. This trial, for them, means the end of all this—the end of compromise and toleration, the end of co-operation with bourgeois parties, or, as *Pravda* would say, the end of counter-revolution.

It is in this sense only that the whole affair acquires its full significance—or can, indeed, be made to make sense at all. Broadly, the plot alleged is that the Yugoslav leaders—the kernel of this final and most dangerous attempt at counter-revolution—are really Trotskyists of long standing who accepted Western aid during the war in order to strengthen themselves for the later undermining of "good" Communists in Eastern Europe. After 1945 they are said to have set about plotting with like-minded "counter-revolutionaries" in neighbouring countries in order better to sabotage the real revolution. Among these was Rajk, who agreed (along with the other seven defendants) to prepare the means for a *putsch* and the murder of some of the present Hungarian leaders. In Rumania a similar plan failed because Patrascanu was "removed in time and isolated from the party." In Poland, their candidate Gomulka "recognised the incorrectness of his line." And so on, in familiar terms. Happily for Hungary, the plan to make a *coup d'état* last spring was "unmasked in time."

Much of this is the wildest rigmarole; some of the stories could only be credible to those who could believe that counter-revolutionary doctors deliberately arranged the death of Gorky. Notably fantastic is Brankov's statement that British and American officers in Yugoslavia during the war "recruited as agents" men as uncompromisingly anti-Western as Djilas and Rankovic. Mr. Churchill and the Foreign Office may have liked to think that Tito, once in power, might go the way of all dictators; they had, as Brigadier Maclean's book (reviewed in our pages this week) has now shown, very little nourishment for such hopes. Whether there is any kernel of truth in this obviously faked-up story we cannot, of course, be certain. It is very unlikely that Rajk was an agent of Horthy's secret police in 1932, and that he led a brigade in the Spanish war with the object of disrupting it. But where evidence is first secretly agreed between accused and prosecution and then publicly confessed, any of it may be true or false.

If the Yugoslav leaders are accused of being Trotskyists, no doubt some of them were; this was always one of the Comintern's difficulties with the Yugoslav party. So, incidentally, was the Yugoslav Communist tendency to indulge in political murder. The Gestapo is said to have recruited agents from among the international brigaders interned in France; it would have been an obvious place for them to try, and, no doubt now and then, by threats, bribes, and blackmail, they succeeded. But all such speculation is beside the point. What stands out from this sordid business, above all, is a warning of the clearest possible kind—that the period of "people's democracy," of toleration, compromise, and coalition, is now finally over. If Rajk and Tito are traitors and hyenas, then we are not surprised to learn that Zilliacus is almost, if not quite, a Fascist beast. What now begins in Eastern Europe is the period of Soviet revolution—the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in real and deadly earnest.

Home Effects of Devaluation

By the time Parliament reassembles next week it should be possible to get a comprehensive picture of the first effects of devaluation. On the home front the frigid reception of the news by the T.U.C. underlines the warning, which we make on another page, that optimistic appeals for harder work are no substitute for a well-thought-out policy designed to increase managerial efficiency and preserve "fair shares for all" and prevent the inflation which will otherwise result from suddenly diverting goods from the home to the dollar market. That capital gains such as those made by speculators in Throgmorton Street, twelve hours after Sir Stafford Cripps's appeal that no one should take personal advantage of the change, are taxed in America and untaxed in Labour Britain is a scandal which must surely be remedied. Furthermore, the profit margins of the firms which reap the dollar harvest must be controlled. Indeed the need now is not for the de-control, which Mr. Harold Wilson preached to the bankers at Oxford last week, but a return to the system built up in 1947 and irresponsibly discarded last Spring. At the other end of the scale, Parliament should immediately press for the fullest use of supplementary allowances by the

National Assistance Board; and urge that the demands of the lowest categories of workers should speedily be met. If these things are not done it will be impossible to prevent a general—and self-defeating—rise in wages.

Outside Repercussions

On the external side, Canadian devaluation by 10 per cent. will mean a 5½d. instead of a 6d. loaf; what the Argentine will do is still uncertain. Now that even the Belgian franc has followed sterling on the downward path, it is clear that British goods are going to have many competitors in the dollar race. This sort of inter-European competition, especially if Germany also enters,) very soon be suicidal. For that reason, if) other, we regret that the British action ken unilaterally and without any prior con- on even with France. This may have been ble, but serious damage has been done needs repairing at once if any European is eve that British participation at Strasbourg ore than a hollow mockery of European It is equally important that the Colonial should immediately review the impact of ation on the Colonies, where the standard g is so miserably low that even the slightest may produce violent social repercussions.

Old Guard Takes Over

Adenauer Government, announced on y in the Federal Assembly at Bonn, is ore than merely a Right-wing government devoted to "free enterprise" and the defence of private profit. It is also a government which gives a German incarnation to the most reactionary of American policies. Not only is it rigidly conservative—nine Ministers from the Christian Democrats (two of them from the Bavarian Right wing), three from the Liberals and two from the nationalist "German Party"—but there is not a man among these Ministers who has stood close to the British. Even Dr. Schlange-Schoeningen was excluded at the last moment—and he, old guard nationalist though he is, has at least a preference for British ways rather than American. In spite of the polite messages which have passed between Mr. Attlee and Herr Adenauer, this is an anti-British government whose bias will not be long in making itself felt. The nonsense of the present British dismantling policy is an invitation to intrigue; Adenauer is likely to accept it. How gravely these Germans, if matters take their present course, will threaten the peace of Europe may be judged from two things: the demand for a place in the Atlantic Pact and the demand for the return of the territories beyond the Oder-Neisse line. The first demand is being pressed incessantly behind the scenes. The second was presented formally in the early passages of Adenauer's first speech as "Federal Chancellor." There is no doubt that in some German and American minds the two demands are inseparable. The demand for revising the present Eastern frontiers of Germany is inevitable. But to allow this demand to serve as an excuse for the rearmament of the Ruhr would be no better than international suicide.

The National Ticket

Meanwhile the German Social Democrats, the "British" party, are in the unhappy position of having the nationalist part of their programme nullified by Mr. Bevin and the social part ignored by Dr. Adenauer. The measure of their embarrassment was shown when some of their deputies, having listened to Adenauer on the sacred rights of capitalism, found it well or wise to applaud him when he came to "foreign relations." This is a dangerous state of affairs. Dr. Schumacher has always realised that the Right must not be allowed to repeat its success of the Twenties in appropriating the "national ticket." For the time being, however, chiefly owing to Mr. Bevin's attitude on dismantling, the Social-Democrats have lost this game. There are two ways in which they can try to restore the position. The first would be to launch a campaign, both nationalist and social, against the capitalist domination now being imposed on Western Germany by the United States and its German adherents. But there is a tremendous difficulty here. To do this would mean at least a *de facto* alliance with the Communists; and from this, since in any case Germany is faced with the threat of economic collapse without large-scale dollar investment, the Social-Democrats recoil with a horror which has been reinforced by the recent fate of Socialist parties in Eastern Europe. The Communists, however, have spent much energy in the past few weeks in wooing the Social-Democrats; they even approached a leading Social-Democrat with the request that he should become their candidate in the recent Presidential election. So far their advances have been repelled. The other alternative for Dr. Schumacher would be to run a constructive campaign for a peaceful European solution abroad and for the adoption of British "fair shares" at home. His speech on Wednesday shows that he is aware of this. But such a campaign depends for its success entirely on the attitude adopted in London.

U.S. Strikes and Pensions

John L. Lewis has once more induced his faithful miners spontaneously to "abstain from work," this time to force larger pension contributions from the operators. But a bigger fight is in prospect in the U.S. steel industry, which has been banking its furnaces all this week in readiness for the strike which one million steelworkers are scheduled to begin on Sunday. This strike was postponed two months ago to permit a fact-finding board appointed by President Truman to seek a compromise. The steelworkers' union had originally asked for an increase of thirty cents an hour, to be divided between wages, a fund for pensions at the rate of $125 a month, and social welfare benefits, including life insurance and medical care. The mediators, however, recommended no wage increase, arguing that this would set off demands in other industries, but agreed that a pension and welfare scheme, at a cost of ten cents an hour, should be paid for entirely by the companies. The steel companies refused to accept this recommendation, arguing that it would mean an immediate increase of three dollars a ton in the price of steel and that, in any case, pensions schemes should include at least a partial contribution from the worker. Philip Murray, however, insists that management is as responsible for pensioning aged workers as it is for replacing depreciated machinery and that, in the absence of adequate State pensions, the unions must secure them from industry. This is indeed, as Mr. Fairless, of U.S. Steel has said, "a revolutionary and far-reaching doctrine" which, if accepted in the steel industry, will be pursued by other unions, now more anxious to win security than wage increases for their members. But it has been accepted by Federal mediators responsible to the President, who have thus put Mr. Murray and his steelworkers in the right if the strike occurs. For the union has agreed to the mediators' proposals while the companies have rejected them. This, indeed, may prove one of the more important disputes in the history of U.S. labour.

The Engineer's Wage

The wage demand of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Confederation, which represents all the main Unions in these industries, was put in just before the pound was devalued, and has not yet been through the preliminary stages of collective negotiation. Like the railwaymen's recently rejected demand, it is a general claim for all grades, skilled and unskilled together; and, even more than the railway claim, which we discuss this week on a later page, it is difficult to deal with by any concession limited to the lowest paid sections. This is so because the skilled craftsmen in engineering and shipbuilding are already discontented at the smallness of the gap between their wage-rates and those of the less skilled workers. That was why they refused to have the case of the railway shopmen who belong to the engineering group of Unions submitted to arbitration together with the N.U.R.'s case for the traffic grades. Devaluation complicates the issue because it reinforces the arguments for special concessions to the lower-paid groups, without in any way weakening the skilled workers' case for a restoration of something nearer the old differential between the craftsmen's and the labourer's rates. The main reasons for this claim are, first, that recruitment to the skilled trades is endangered unless there is a sufficient inducement to serve an apprenticeship at a low wage, and, secondly, that, with the spread of piecework, semi-skilled workers can often earn as much as fully skilled craftsmen. But with the necessity of checking for the present any general upward movement of wage-rates, the craftsmen stand a poor chance of getting their real grievances redressed for some time to come.

The Health Service's First Year

The long review, in the current issue of *The Practitioner*, of the first year's working of the National Health Service gives an interesting account of what has been happening as it is seen through the eyes of a number of practitioners in different fields, each contributor, we are told, having been chosen as holding no strong political views on the scheme. The result is necessarily a series of *ex parte* statements, which need to be complemented by the views of typical members of the public, representatives of the local authorities, and so on; but, taken for what it is, the review is illuminating on many points. First, it is clear that many doctors have been very hard-worked, not only in a professional sense, but also because of the heavily increased burden of office work. Secondly, it seems pretty clear that the only serious financial sufferers are some of the Harley Street specialists, and that G.P.s, as well as dentists, though to a less extent, have no grumble about pay, except in relation to heavier work. Thirdly, the growing pains have been much less serious than was feared. Only a small minority of the public has wantonly misused the service; but *some* G.P.s have also abused it, by sending too many simple cases to the hospitals for out-patient consultation or treatment. Fourthly, as everyone knows, the cost was seriously underestimated, mainly because of an under-estimate of the real needs. Fifthly, the maternity service is not doing too well, because of the inexpertness of many G.P.s and bad co-ordination between doctors and midwives. Sixthly, there are serious staff shortages at many points. Finally, several of the contributors suggest that *token* payments for certain special services would do much to check abuses; but there seems to be little support for any *general* introduction of payments by patients over and above what they contribute under the compulsory scheme.

AFTER THE DELUGE

ALTHOUGH for obvious reasons the Chancellor had to state in his broadcast that devaluation was an act of free will, the blunt fact is that it was forced upon the Government. The arguments against devaluation were stated so often by Government spokesmen and accepted without challenge by the House of Commons that they need not be repeated here. Indeed, the contrast between the Chancellor's repudiation of it two months ago and his earnest recommendation of it on Sunday is the best indication that he was the victim of circumstance.

What has happened to explain this complete change of front? Put in its simplest terms, the financiers of the world, sustained no doubt by Mr. Churchill's attacks on Socialist bankruptcy, "lost confidence" in the pound; and no exchange controls availed to prevent them from buying and selling sterling on a gigantic black market. This lack of confidence was transformed into a panic flight from the pound by a whisper campaign initiated by the American Treasury, predicting that devaluation would take place last Sunday. Ever since last April, Mr. Snyder has been an intransigeant and vocal exponent of the view that the old rate could not and should not be sustained. The rest of the world accepted his judgment and the British Government was forced "voluntarily" to devalue. The alternative, as Sir Stafford pointed out, was the rapid exhaustion of our reserves and large-scale unemployment.

In order to recover from a defeat the first step is to admit that one has been defeated. Nothing could be more mistaken than to pretend that any responsible member of the Government wanted devaluation until it was absolutely inevitable. Despite Sir Stafford's earnest appeal it would be fantastic to believe that increased exports to the New World, even at the new cut prices, will close the gap when Marshall Aid comes to an end. Devaluation does provide a real incentive for British manufacturers to transfer their attentions from safe soft currency markets to the dollar area. The whisky manufacturer can hope to pocket most of the margin as sheer profit, since he will not require to reduce his price. Others, not so fortunately placed, can reduce their prices by 15 per cent. and yet keep the other 15 per cent. for turnovers. Finally, the Chancellor can look forward to a buoyant revenue, since 60 per cent. of the profits made go into the Exchequer. But although he can hope for a real increase of dollar earnings from this "gold rush," it would be foolhardy to regard it as a solution. As to the effect of the change on the cost of living, it would be prudent to assume that the dearer loaf is only a first instalment and that a fairly rapid rise of 5 to 7 points in the index figure is at least probable. Lastly, every Socialist should frankly recognise that if, as seems clear, a cut in our living standards was inevitable, devaluation is not a socially equitable way of carrying it out. Some business firms will do very well out of it and few middle-class people will suffer seriously from its effect on their personal incomes. Only the poor and, in particular, the old-age pensioners will really feel it: and the Government would be well advised to prepare plans for immediately increasing family allowances and the rate of supplementary pensions.

To say this is not to argue that the Government had in September 1949 any way of escaping devaluation—once the water had begun to trickle through the dam the burst was inevitable—but merely to see it in its proper perspective. By suggesting that after all everything will be for the best if only the workers work even harder and restrain their wage claims, the Cabinet would merely be preparing the way for a second and a third surrender to circumstances. The only way to draw some advantage from the defeat is to examine its causes and draw the right conclusions from them.

What the events of the last two months have proved is the extent of our dependence on America. British Socialism had to dance to Mr. Snyder's tune because the alternative, in the circumstances, was economic collapse. All the brave words, inspired by the 1948 figures, about our growing economic independence of American assistance, have proved tragically over-optimistic. Because we still rely on dollar imports of vital raw materials and food stuffs, we are being compelled to reduce our modest standard of living in an effort to pay for them. If British manufactures, apart from a few specialist and luxury articles which have always found a market, are now sold in great quantities in the U.S.A. this will not be because we have excelled the Americans in productivity or salesmanship but because we shall be exploiting the combination of a far lower standard of living with the special advantages which accrue for a time at least to the devaluer. To accept this as an inevitable and enduring relationship between Britain and America would be the end of our experiment in democratic Socialism.

The disturbing feature of Sir Stafford's broadcast is the stress which he placed on the need for dollar exports and the absence of any reference to the search for alternative sources of supply. Yet the only way to regain our independence is to reduce by every means in our power our imports from the dollar area. We should certainly earn all the dollars we can—since there is an irreducible minimum which we should in any case have to import from the New World—but what we must avoid doing is building up the illusion that increased dollar exports can ever buy from the New World the cotton, tobacco, metals and oil which we need.

This brings us into the wider sphere of foreign policy. The present determination to achieve the closest possible political and military collaboration with the U.S.A. against the Soviet Union has brought our political and economic interests into flagrant contradiction. Under the Atlantic Pact we are seeking ever closer interdependence with the New World, while every economic consideration demands that we reduce our dependence upon it. It was no accident that Mr. Bevin accompanied Sir Stafford Cripps on his mission to Washington. His discussions with Mr. Acheson were a reminder that in the Middle East, Africa, India, South-East Asia, and now in Hong Kong, Britain has been carrying exclusive military responsibility for what in reality are Anglo-American commitments. To sustain these commitments unilaterally, we are spending £800,000,000 this year and the bill next year is likely to be still higher. The presence of 25,000 British soldiers in Hong Kong and the fact that Mr. Bevin was not asking for any American reinforcements was no doubt a powerful argument why America should treat Britain sympathetically in her present economic difficulties; and our willingness to sustain these commitments indefinitely made it easier for the U.S. Administration to state that "the maintenance of the sterling area is a vital American concern" and to grant to our negotiators—with some hope that Congress will approve—the rather vague concessions listed in the Washington communiqué.

But now that devaluation has been forced on us, the time has come to ask whether the special position Mr. Bevin has achieved for this country *vis-à-vis* America through his foreign policy is really worth the colossal sacrifices which it demands. Are we really so much better off than the other nations of Western Europe who do not enjoy this special position? If, in the modern world, neither Britain nor the Commonwealth can stand alone, would it not be wiser to accept an equal place in a political Union of Europe big enough to bargain on something like equal terms with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. rather than aiming at an English-Speaking-Union in which Britain is becoming step by step a subordinate dependency?

THE RAILWAYMEN UP AGAINST IT

THE railwaymen are the first body of workers to be confronted with the problem of meeting the new situation created by the devaluation of sterling. It will affect a wide range of domestic prices before a new equilibrium is worked out. Indeed, it could have no real meaning unless it did. The effects may be gradual, but they are certain to be considerable in the long run.

The railwaymen have, therefore, to face the question, not merely of accepting a decision which leaves their real wages unchanged, but of acquiescing in a cut which, though small at first, will certainly become larger as devaluation produces its after-effects. They can, of course, kick against the pricks by unofficial work-to-rule movements, in the hope of wringing concessions from the Government, which can by no means afford a serious dislocation of the main transport system just now. But they cannot hope that such action will avail to secure them any all-round advance, for the simple reason that, if the Government were to give way in this instance, it could not possibly resist a hundred other claims which would be immediately presented to it on equally cogent grounds. For the general upward revision of wage-rates which would then ensue, the British economy cannot possibly afford scope until there has been a really big further rise in production. It is now obviously imperative to export much more if even the present ratio of exports to necessary imports is to be maintained; and it is also necessary to keep down the home consumption of all goods with any considerable hard currency import content. Under these conditions a general rise in wages, or in any other important kind of income, could only lead to inflationary pressure on prices, which it would be exceedingly difficult to keep in check. We are in a tight place: money wages cannot be increased, and for the time at any rate real wages are accordingly bound to fall: nor can the great present strength of Trade Unionism in any way prevent this, because the source of that strength—full employment—would disappear if rising costs were to wipe out the effects of devaluation.

It is in some ways unfortunate that this choice should confront the railwaymen first of all, because the threat of unemployment is in their case much less evident and immediate than in other occupations—above all, the industries most dependent on exports. Nevertheless, it could not be long before the effects of a fall in economic activity reacted on railway traffic and

revenue and led to a situation that would involve both dismissals and, probably, demands for wage-reductions as well. The railwaymen, therefore, have really no choice, as far as their main demand, for an all-round increase, is concerned. They have to take the knock, whether they take it quietly or after vain resistance: the hope is that, if it is taken now, it will not be too hard a knock after all.

This hard argument does not, however, dispose of that part of the railwaymen's case which rests on the argument that the lowest grades among them are being seriously underpaid. The situation is not quite so desperate that it is necessary to say that no body of workers can receive any advance. Sir Stafford Cripps in his statement on devaluation recognised that the anticipated rise in living costs might involve readjustments to help out the groups at the bottom of the income scale. The strength of the railwaymen's case for an advance to the lowest-paid grades, such as was offered at one stage of the negotiations by the Railway Executive itself, therefore depends on the actual economic situation of the grades concerned. On this issue, the recent tribunal rejected the railwaymen's claims on the ground that actual earnings, including substantial overtime payments, are a good way above wage-rates; whereas the N.U.R. contends that no account should be taken of payments for extra work in assessing the weekly rate necessary to yield a tolerable minimum standard. Under most conditions the N.U.R.'s claim would be valid; and even as matters stand today it has considerable force, for in railway work, where there is not much room for such things as bonuses on output, overtime payments must be reckoned as in effect a part of the incentive needed to secure a satisfactory effort. There should, accordingly, still be room for some concessions in this account, but they cannot be large because, were they so, it would be made even harder to resist the claims of the more highly skilled groups, including the skilled shopmen, that the margins between skilled and unskilled workers are already too small to provide adequate incentives or to ensure an adequate flow of young workers into skilled occupations. There are real dangers in anything that would further narrow these margins; and yet something should be done immediately for those who are at present getting barely enough for decent subsistence. Even on the meanest argument of "marginal utility" it is surely clear that when the cost of living goes up there is a danger of some real wages falling to a level at which there is no economic advantage in being employed over receiving social insurance benefits.

In effect, we are this time really up against it; and the task of persuading the workers that there is no alternative is much the harder because of the high profits that prevail through most of the private sectors of industry, and of the writing up of capital values which is bound to be one of the consequences of devaluation. It is not at all easy to get workmen to believe that firms which are making abnormally high profits cannot increase wages; and even in the socialised sector there is a strong working-class feeling that interest payments on capital ought to take second place to the payment of a satisfactory wage. It is not realised that the question is not in truth how much particular firms can afford, but how much purchasing power the whole country can afford to have distributed to chase limited supplies of consumers' goods. However much it is demonstrated that high profits do not affect the situation adversely, provided they are either held off the market or used for necessary investments in new capital goods, the workers, looking at the high profits, will not be easily convinced that the capitalist classes are not still doing very nicely at their expense. As, indeed, in terms of capital appreciation as distinct from immediate free income, many of them undoubtedly are.

If the workers are to be looked to for acquiescence in the prospective fall in real wages, provided that it can be kept within moderate limits, there must be a *quid pro quo*. Far from yielding to demands for tax remissions on reinvested profits, or for other concessions to the recipients of unearned incomes, the Chancellor will have to show that he is determined more than ever to uphold the principle of "fair shares" in dividing up a cake of which the total size is smaller than was hoped. The best way of doing this would be to follow up what has already been accomplished in the field of income re-distribution by means of direct taxation with a drastic scaling down of inequality in ownership through taxation of inheritance on some sort of coherent plan and a capital levy which would regain for the public some part of the appreciation of capital values accruing to the owners of real as distinct from money assets.

Such measures are for the next Budget. But the Chancellor must take immediate steps to keep price increases down to the smallest practicable amounts and to prevent them altogether wherever there are monopoly revenues that can be made to take the strain. Unless these things are done, devaluation and its effects will inevitably be regarded as the outcome of capitalist pressure—American and British combined—having the object of undermining the Socialist experiment in this country; and in that event no amount of persuasion will prevent the working classes from taking, whatever the consequences to themselves, any line of revolt that is open to them. Such a revolt the British economy is now less than ever in a position to afford; and the only way of preventing it is to give the working classes a further objective assurance that the Labour Government is standing fast by its Socialist principles.

A LONDON DIARY

I HAVE no doubt that, in making up their minds to reverse their policy on devaluation, both the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary were very much influenced by their memories of 1931. Then, an inexperienced Labour Government was faced with the after-effects of Mr. Churchill's return to the Gold Standard, combined with an American slump. As the crisis developed, the world bankers, encouraged by a wild campaign in the Tory press, lost confidence in the pound; and the cry went up that sterling could only be saved by cutting the dole. So rudimentary was the Government's knowledge of economics in 1931 that it mistook the cure for the disease. MacDonald and Snowden decided that it was their patriotic duty to avert devaluation by slashing social services. They split the Cabinet in so doing and then formed the National Government with the express purpose of saving the pound. Its first action, or rather reaction, was to abandon the Gold Standard, after which it won an election and carried out the policy of retrenchment. Looking back now we can see that it was the devaluation which was the real "shot in the arm" for British exports and that retrenchment probably retarded recovery. With these memories to aid them, Stafford Cripps and Ernest Bevin got the diagnosis right this time. I gather that it was not only Mr. Eccles and the *Economist* who were urging that devaluation without retrenchment would be useless and that specific proposals for axing the Welfare State should be presented to Mr. Snyder in Washington. A strong body of Treasury opinion, as well as Bank of England pundits, urged the same course. At one point they were actually trying to prevent the devaluation announcement last Sunday because they saw that it would enable the Government to evade the attack on the social services which is the heart's desire of so many economic experts. If Cripps had taken their advice he would, of course, have split the Government and then we should really have had 1931 all over again. Instead he refused to do so and categorically stated, at his Press conference, that there would be no cuts in social services. This story explains the obvious chagrin of the Tory newspapers. Having played no small part in fomenting the flight from the pound they really believed that they had put the Government "on the spot" and created the conditions for a National Government, which has always been the real aim of Churchill and Eden. But the Chancellor has slipped out of the trap and at the very least has gained a few months of valuable time. Electorally he may also have turned the tables on his opponents. But that depends whether rank-and-file Trade Unionists have enough confidence in the Government to go very steady on wage claims.

* * *

Describing the Edinburgh Festival performance of "Faust" last week, Desmond Shawe-Taylor praised the Mephistopheles of Gustav Gruendgens in terms which might have seemed extravagant to anyone who has not seen this actor. Film-goers may remember his performance in the macabre Nazi version of the Joan of Arc story. He played the Dauphin and those who saw the play in Hitler's Germany tell me of the terrific impression Gruendgens made when he argued in the climax of the film that Joan's death was essential to French interests: though she had become embarrassing as a flesh and blood leader, she would be invaluable, after death, as a political myth. In those days Gruendgens was Göring's pet actor, Director of the State Schausspielhaus in Berlin, State Councillor, Senator of Reich Culture and Member of the Committee of the Reich Theatre Council. He also had the reputation of being as Mephistophelian as Goebbels himself and capable of equalling the Propaganda Minister in his mordant comments on fellow members of the Nazi élite. The next I heard of him was in 1943, when he delivered an important lecture hymning the spirit of the front-line soldier as the inspiration of German art; and after Stalingrad he made a broadcast supporting Goebbels' appeal for total war. In 1945, he stayed in Berlin and worked very amicably for the Russians. When attention was called to his past, he moved to the British Zone and became one of the outstanding champions of Western Christendom. Gruendgens was indeed an outstanding Nazi intellectual, a nihilist with romantic leanings and a passionate admiration for power. I can think of no man who understands the role of Mephistopheles, as Goethe created him, better. But though I admire his acting as much as Mr. Taylor, I wonder whether it was really wise to heap honours on this particular German as the representative of Goethe's Germany at the Edinburgh Festival.

* * *

Complaints that Frenchmen cross to Dover for free hospital treatment and that bald Belgians get free Bevan wigs are obviously mainly tara-diddle. In so far as there is any truth in them, they constitute a pretty compliment to our health service and a first step forward to sane internationalism. I read that the Foreign Ministers of the Five Brussels Powers at their meeting next

month will discuss providing medical and social services free to anyone from one signatory country visiting another. The only snag seems to be that the Dutch are blocking a further proposal to exchange actual medical facilities. If this were carried into effect, an Englishman could get treatment at Aix-les-Bains at French expense and a Belgian who needed a specialised operation could go to an English surgeon. If the Dutch do not like this, we, the French, Belgians and Luxemburgers, should go ahead on our own.

* * *

In our correspondence columns today, an English resident in New York gives a first-hand account of the organised attempt by American war veterans to prevent Paul Robeson giving a concert at Peekskill, New York. His report differs in no important respect from reports I have seen in the *New York Times* and other responsible American journals. In the face of these accounts the enquiry set up by Governor Dewey is a terrifying comment on the trend of official America. Dewey has ordered a special grand jury to investigate this mob violence, stating in its terms of reference that the disorders were obviously provoked by "Communist groups"! The jury is to discover not whether the war veterans acted as storm troopers or whether, as observers allege, the police attacked Robeson's followers rather than defending them, but whether this concert was organised as "part of the Communist strategy to foment racial and religious hatred" and whether the "Communist-led guard forces" constituted "a quasi-military force"!

* * *

The death of Francis Worsley, the man who produced "Itma" from its cradle to its grave, raises a problem of B.B.C. policy which deserves the attention of Lord Beveridge's committee. Worsley preferred working as a producer "at the coal face" to an assured career as a pit-head planner in Broadcasting House. By abandoning his place in the administrative hierarchy (where he had done well) in order to put a show on the air he accepted a rank and a salary much lower than those which the bureaucrats of broadcasting attain. Two of the three men who made "Itma" did well out of it financially, and deservedly so. But Francis Worsley, who shared with Ted Kavenagh the creative responsibility, continued to draw no more than his modest salary of about £1,000 a year. He was "the pro on the staff" in the one branch of the entertainment business which offers no incentives to such talent and devotion as his. By pedigree and training a highbrow, Francis Worsley nevertheless developed a flair for Variety entertainment which, had it been applied in the cinema or cabaret or music-hall world, would have put him in the money and the neon lights. Personally such rewards would have made little appeal to him, but he would have appreciated a higher status and recognition for the producer-class in radio. One way to better Variety on the air would be to give men of his creative merit posts of senior responsibility and remuneration at Broadcasting House, instead of putting them underneath the administrative mandarins.

* * *

The young man in the red check shirt and the girl in the jaunty velvet jacket were in hot argument. Lysenko? Sartre? The pound? Not the least: with heads bent over a large photograph of the Parthenon they were trying to determine where one of the Metopes had stood. I had gone back to the Elgin rooms of the British Museum to revisit the Marbles after their ten years in the Aldwych Tube: these young people were very likely seeing them for the first time. Set against the blue walls of the redecorated galleries, the sculptures seem to be removed from the category of interesting objects to be dutifully visited. To the post-war generation they are fresh, challenging and alive as once they were to Keats. Only originals are now shown; but there is a discreet display of photographs of casts of the west frieze taken by Elgin in 1802, together with photographs of the frieze in position on the Parthenon in 1938. The Marbles are apt to trouble our consciences, however clear our legal claim; and it is comforting to know that the friezes Elgin took are in startlingly better condition then the friezes he left in place.

* * *

A London publisher sends me a letter he has received explaining what has happened to the royalties due on the Tauchnitz edition of his books sold on the continent. First, he is informed that the royalties due to him for the authors of the books are officially deposited with the Hamburger Kreditbank. The sum due was originally RM. 88.34. The Allied authorities reduced this sum to DM. 8.83. "From this sum the following deductions were made by the authorities: 5 per cent., that is DM. 0.45 for the establishment of the account with the bank, 35 per cent. of the rest, DM. 3.08 had been cancelled, 4 per cent., that is to say, DM. 0.35 taken by the custodian as fees and the balance of DM. 4.95 is at your disposal." But that is not all. The authorities were also asked whether it was "possible to transfer the moneys to the authors before it has completely disappeared." The answer was that the "respective authors could use their share of the money if they would come over to Germany." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

He requested his trustees to destroy all his Sermons, and left his harp and £50 to the Royal School for Daughters of Officers of the Army.—*Brighouse & Elland Echo.* (F. W. Southern.)

Will the owner of a grey-coloured goat, which was found in Lea Bridge-road, Clapton, on Wednesday, please contact Hackney police station immediately? It is pointed out that the confined space may not suit the goat.—*Hackney Gazette.* (Derek S. Pugh.)

Solve Your Problem Ltd. (Agency), urgently require office accommodation for own use; moderate rent.—Advert in *The Times.* (Leslie P. Wenham.)

Why should we devalue the pound when there are millions of dollars' worth of art treasures in our art galleries and museums?—*Daily Mail.* (K. G. Faris.)

It was alleged at Caerphilly yesterday that when ——, a young Pengam collier, who was lying across a railway track on Sunday night with the intention of committing suicide, was told by a porter that there would be no train on that line until yesterday morning, nine hours later, he replied, "I wait till then."—*Manchester Guardian.* (H. W. Trickett.)

For sale, very good Guernsey T.T. Heifer; lady's pet; good house cow guaranteed.—Advt. in *The Times.* (B. G. Redfern.)

Rotten Row becomes the more dignified Routine Row further up the street, and householders think the offending word should now be dropped.—*Courier and Advertiser*, Ilford. (A. McAskill.)

"YE OLDE MOTEL"

THE motel, that integral part of the American Way of Travel, is now Available for Export. According to Mr. Whitney, of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Britain could lure many dollars from the new pound-rich tourists by offering them this familiar kind of accommodation. The matter has already been discussed on the official level. It comes, presumably, under President Truman's Fourth Point: technical assistance to backward nations. For what else is a country without "Alnite Service," "Dremebeds" or "Kozykabins"? If only the American tourist, Mr. Whitney seems to imply, could be spared the rigours of the British hotel, where both prices and service are unattractive, and provided with the same amenities he would find on Highway 66, outside Flagstaff, Arizona, he might be more inclined to spend his vacation here.

But does Britain really need motels? In the United States, they answer a specific need. They give each tourist a one-roomed cottage or cabin, with space alongside for his car. Some, but by no means all of them, have a restaurant. They have two advantages over the hotel. First, they are sited either in the country, beside main traffic routes, perhaps miles from the nearest town, or are on the outskirts of a town. If you are making a long trip, and have no desire to make personal or business calls en route, you can stop late at night and leave early next morning without wasting time looking for and checking in and out of a hotel. Secondly, in more remote districts, you can stay close to many tourist attractions which are, perhaps, thirty or forty miles from the nearest town with hotel facilities. But the motel can prosper only on a large and steady business, which depends on a great volume of motor traffic. Even then, as "For Sale" notices I have seen so often show, they are a risky investment. It is, moreover, untrue that the motel is cheaper than the normal hotel. In the course of a 25,000-mile journey in the U.S. last year, I rapidly discovered that it was both more convenient and less expensive to stay at hotels than to use auto courts, wherever one had the choice. I suspect that, with building costs and overheads as high as they are in Britain to-day, the same would be true here.

Suppose, however, that the British motel could compete in price with the average country hotel. Are there other arguments in its favour? Distances are much less in this country. The tourist who fails to find a room need not drive on for more than a few miles before he comes to another town. He will not see such warning signs as "Last Chance Cabins: Desert Ahead." In any case, the normal tourist in Britain, even the American with a powerful car, only potters around by American standards. And do we really expect, even though the pound is devalued, enough Americans to bring over their cars to make this specialised service pay? It is true that in some parts of this country, the Scottish Highlands or Wales, for example, accommodation is limited. But that scarcity is largely due to a limited demand. Put a motel on the road from Strome to Loch Maree. Will the traffic bear it, especially when tourism is confined to three or four months of the year?

Economically, there is the poorest of arguments for this innovation. So far as service goes, there is certainly a case for improving many of our hotels. But money and materials would be better spent on improving existing facilities—especially for the tourist who does not plan ahead and drops in casually somewhere—than on harum-scarum schemes based on false analogies.

But the strongest case against the motel, in my opinion, is on grounds of amenity. The American motel rejoices in bogus architecture. Where else, for instance, would one stay in wood and plaster wigwams, with toilets marked "Braves" and "Squaws"? Or in a Snow White House, an imitation conestoga wagon or a Tudor Village? It is the last which worries me. For we British have much the same weakness for the bogus, even if we lack the frontier tradition. It does not need much imagination to conjure up a picture of the motel an enterprising promotor might build on the outskirts of Stratford. Why not Gothic cabins outside Canterbury, a walled tourist camp near York or clachans round Edinburgh? Even if the designs were less hideous, it is difficult to see how they could be successfully blended with the local landscape, given their purpose and their inevitable commercialisation. We have enough horrors in the English countryside as it is. The more we create, the less appeal it has. Tourists do not travel to get the impression they are back home. Or if they do, why not put New York ferryboats on the Grand Canal or pull down the *Deux Magots* and put up a drugstore? The motel myth is based on the same assumptions.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

WHERE THE MAQUIS FOUGHT

Every year there are forest fires in France, but this year they took on the dimensions of a national disaster. In the Landes and the Gironde the damage is estimated at at least £5,000,000, and over 100 people lost their lives. The fires took on such dimensions that they almost provoked a government crisis, and the Queuille Cabinet will have some awkward questions and charges of "criminal carelessness" to answer when Parliament meets. Meantime, extravagant charges are made by the Right press against "Spanish Republicans" setting fire to the woods (poor Spanish Republicans!—no one has had a rawer deal than they from the governments of Western Europe—or from the Soviet Government, for that matter), while the *Humanité* promptly detected the hand of Wall Street setting fire to the woods, and so smashing a dangerous competitor—the French turpentine trade!

If, indeed, there may have been a few cases of arson, the real culprits are, however, plain human carelessness and—the weather. Camping has become almost universal with working-class youth and all those who cannot afford to pay the present hotel bills, but still want a holiday, and what anti-fire regulations there are have been neither observed nor enforced. Besides, a mere cigarette-end dropped out of a railway carriage may have started many a forest fire in France.

While the blaze round Bordeaux was at its height, I happened to be travelling around the Massif Central. I remember how, at several points along the line that runs through the hilly country between Bort in the Corrèze and Aurillac in the Cantal, trees and bushes were on fire, filling the hot air with black smoke that smelled of the Blitz nights in London. Oddly enough, this was not, however, the local people's chief concern. An elderly French miner, who joined my compartment at Mauriac, said gloomily: "*Ce sera la misère cet hiver*: in this part of the country just now beans ought to cost next to nothing, but they already sell at 140 francs a kilo, and the potatoes in my garden are little bigger than cherries." The drought: all over France, and especially here in the Massif Central, they are all talking about it. The old people don't remember such a drought. And the papers say that one must go back to 1893 to find anything comparable to it. The trees were still green, but the fields were a dirty yellow; the mountain streams round Murat and Aurillac were reduced to a trickle; and at Saint Flour, perched high on the hill and looking like an inland Mont St. Michel, the water was "on" only one hour a day. M. Dommergue, the Mayor, told me the city had had to spend a few million francs to purchase some private springs to add to its water supply. "High up in the mountains the pastures are still passable, but otherwise the grasslands are parched, and we shall be desperately short of fodder. There is going to be a slump in meat, while cheese, butter and milk are already short." I had read that day something in the paper about meat prices being maintained in France through some new scheme of selling meat to England; but whenever I mentioned this I found people sceptical. There was no proper organisation for that sort of thing, and no refrigeration machinery.

So far one cannot speak of calamity or disaster; but for five years Central France has suffered from shortage of rain. With each successive dry summer the mountain reserves of water go down and, to make things worse, last winter there was snow in the mountains of the Cantal for only a fortnight, instead of the usual three or four months. The outsider is struck by the grandeur of the fir tree forests that cover the hills of Murat and Le Lioran, but deforestation before and during the war is nevertheless blamed for the change of climate. These months of heat will have economic repercussions in France—and maybe political. After the good harvest of '48 there were many who prophesied that France could become this year an important exporter of foodstuffs. These hopes have not been fulfilled. True, the wheat crop, estimated at nearly seven million tons, will be above average, and will suffice to meet France's home needs; but feeding stuffs, as well as butter, cheese, milk, and vegetables (all important in the French diet) will be scarce, and one may reasonably expect, in the absence of rationing, a fairly sharp rise in the cost of living. The present attempt to keep prices down by importing butter and other produce from Holland and Denmark is no radical solution. Hence the possibility of labour troubles. The peasants are, no doubt, having much trouble with the drought, but it is the townspeople, rather than the peasants, who will again suffer.

From the general standpoint of French economy the mass slaughter of cattle would be a serious setback. All over France one of the proudest achievements of the peasantry has been the restoration of the livestock to pre-war, or almost to pre-war, dimensions. But even if there is no mass slaughter, the enormous further improvement in the livestock situation expected this year will be retarded. An official bulletin of the Ministry of Agriculture said some months ago: "By the end of this year we shall be better off in livestock than before the war—provided the summer is not too dry." That is just what has happened. As regards cereals, the target for 1952 under the Monnet plan of ten million tons of wheat which would leave a large export surplus, is far from being approached.

The Cantal, with its mountains and woods, is a part of France where the Maquis was strongest. In the market square of Murat, high on the hill, Gessler, Himmler's chief Gestapo assistant, was assassinated in '44, after which 140 people of Murat—mostly men—(out of 2,000 inhabitants) were deported to Buchenwald and other concentration camps in Germany and Poland, and only 40 returned alive. Now, in the square, there is a monument to the deportees, showing human figures in chains, and enumerating the murder camps where the people of Murat died.

One night in the steep, narrow streets of Murat they had a *fête du quartier*. A band of accordionists was playing, young people were dancing on a platform decorated with Chinese lanterns, and the shopkeepers had made fine displays in their windows, the hairdresser illustrating, with the help of celluloid dolls (in the last of the four *tableaux* the doll is stripped bare) his conflicts with the inspector of taxes. People stood in front of the hairdresser's and chuckled. And there was also a funny little drunk who chased the youngsters down the street twirling his walking stick like a rapier, much to the enjoyment of the people sitting outside the café. Yet, for all that, there was a sense of strain in the town—an uncanny feeling that the hundred dead deportees of Murat—brothers and husbands and fathers—were also there, at the *fête du quartier*, with its Chinese lanterns, accordions, the funny drunk and the church bell loudly striking eleven.

At Saint Flour, too, there was a monument, not to deportees, but to those twenty-five who were shot in June 1944—among them a Dr. Mallet, of the local hospital, and his two sons. Had he been shot as a hostage, or had he been betrayed as an active member of the Resistance? No one seemed to know definitely. But one story was that he knew he had been denounced to the Gestapo, but that he stayed on at the hospital as there was no one else to look after the patients. Anyway, he was a local hero of the Resistance; his wife, who, together with her daughter—the last of the Mallet children—was deported to Germany, returned safely, and was now a town councillor. There was much tragedy in this part of France, and many people here had guts. Many, it is true, joined the Maquis simply to avoid deportation; but the Cantal had its real heroes and its real martyrs, too. Yet many peasants I talked to had mixed feelings about the Maquis; one old woman said that the Germans duly paid for everything, while the Maquis did not; and afterwards there was much dirty vendetta work. Even so, this is not a part of France where the thought of German rearmament is much cherished.

It is a country of medium-sized, mostly stock-breeding, farms; and here, as elsewhere, the peasants "are not to be pitied," as the French say. They grew rich during and after the war, and improved their equipment. In the National Assembly the Department is represented by one Communist, one Socialist, and one Agrarian; in the Senate by two Radicals; in the Conseil Général the Socialists have an absolute majority. Now the Socialists are very hopeful that the Communists may be largely eliminated from the next Parliament if, as they hope, a compromise is reached between the Socialists and the M.R.P. on the virtual abolition of proportional representation. I asked one Socialist what effect he thought the Vatican excommunication measures would have on the Communist voters in France. "None at all," he said. "We have our strong Gallican tradition in France, and both Left and Right expect the Vatican to mind its own business. Remember," he added, "that before the war the Vatican excommunicated the Action Française. It did not make the slightest difference to the following of Maurras. And if these ultra-reactionaries did not turn a hair, your rank-and-file Communist voter will be even less affected by the Vatican thunderbolts. It is not the Vatican; it is the abolition of P.R. that will get us the Communists' seats—if not their votes!"

St. Flour, Cantal. ALEXANDER WERTH

SO THEY SAY . . .

One of the more striking aspects of the Press treatment on Monday of the devaluation of the pound was the way the Conservative papers skirted round saying why the step had been taken. The *Daily Graphic* for instance, managed to avoid giving any reason at all in its front-page lead story, which was headlined: POUND DEVALUED, NOW WORTH 14S. IN U.S.: BREAD UP TO 6D. A LOAF. Its second story began "Wall Street was shocked . . ." (*Daily Express* next day: WALL-ST. HARDLY NOTICED IT), and there was another story headlined: NEWS LEFT THE SOCIALIST LEADERS DUMB. This turned out to be a graphic description of how Messrs. Dalton, Griffiths, and Morgan Phillips listened to Cripps's broadcast, and then said: "No comment . . we decided that beforehand."

The *Daily Telegraph*, after tucking Cripps's reasons well down the page, complained that the decision was "such a complete reversal of [Cripps's] own views . . . that it might be thought to cause him grave embarrassment as the holder of his office." The *Daily Mail* also reported that "politicians were very critical of Sir Stafford Cripps for his big somersault". The *Daily Express*, however, summarily disposed of such disingenuous arguments in its editorial:

> Let no one blame Sir Stafford for a turncoat. It is the duty of the Chancellor to sustain the currency by all and every means until a contrary decision is reached . . .

The *Express* also praised Cripps for his "courage and high degree of skill as an advocate" (*Daily Mail* next day: "The way it is being put over . . . reeks of political dishonesty and party opportunism"), and admitted elsewhere that the pound was devalued "in an attempt to sell more goods to America and Canada," but concluded its editorial, after suggesting that the pound should have been "let go free," with a typical oversimplification:

> The only method that has been produced for the purpose of dealing with the problems that confront the nation is an act of inflation which raises the price of the loaf.

The *Daily Mail* agreed that the pound should have been freed, and that the "primary reason for devaluing the pound is to cut the costs of our exports," and then ran a story beginning:

> The Cripps broadcast has already caused turmoil in the trade union movement. Some of the most powerful leaders criticised it last night. . . .

Who were these "powerful leaders"? The *Mail* story went on to mention only two. One was Mr. Arthur Deakin ("most powerful member of the General Council"), who said that it "came as a bit of a shock . . . [but] if there is no other way . . . to maintain full employment, then we have no choice." The other was Sir William Lawther, who, the *Mail* stated, had been "won over" to Cripps's point of view.

Of the *Telegraph*, *Express*, *Mail*, and *Graphic*, only the *Telegraph* and *Graphic* carried Mr. Snyder's comment that devaluation was a "constructive economic step . . should be a healthy impetus."

The non-Conservative papers naturally looked somewhat different. The *Daily Mirror*, for instance:

> "THE ONLY WAY"—£ CHEAPENED FOR DOLLAR DRIVE AND TO AVOID BIG UNEMPLOYMENT—BREAD PRICE UP 1½D.—NO OTHER PRICES SHOULD RISE, SAYS CRIPPS.

The *News Chronicle* headlined the fact that there was NO REASON FOR ANY OTHER SHOP PRICE RISE, and got to the point in the second sentence of its lead story: "This has been done to stimulate exports . . . check [dollar] imports . . . and so ease the drain on our reserves."

The *Daily Herald*, however, achieved the euphemism of the year with its main headline:

> CRIPPS: £ REVALUED.

AUTOLYCUS.

ULLAPOOL

AT Killiecrankie a bull-dozer was working, moving earth from here to there. On Aviemore platform a woman stood fingering paper-backs at a kiosk: "What I want is a love-story about doctors and nurses." There were dozens of white swans on the grey sea of Beauly; and, somewhere between Garve and Ullapool, where bus took over from train, the South vanished. It disappeared in the rear-view of the driving-mirror. Reality was turned outside-in. Bull-dozers, paper-backs, Edinburgh, London and all raucous Europe belonged to the Southern twilight, unimportant, negative, trivial.

Ullapool has achieved, among bird-watchers, the distinction of offering a habitat in its streets to both the sparrow and the twite. That is one way of saying that this small coastal township, on the narrow finger of a sea-loch, is an oasis of mankind surrounded by what was once called Nature. The twite is not on the side of civilisation, nor is the vast hinterland of hill and moor amenable to the discipline of plough or factory. Few people go further North to the region of Suilven and Stac Polly, part of the most rigorously primitive, and incidentally the oldest rock formation in Europe. It is beyond the normal frontiers of the tourist, and is tacitly avoided by the intellect anxious to analyse and label. It is a country that deals abruptly with the emissaries of a chatter-box civilisation. A few weeks of enforced idleness in Wester Ross might make the Calvinist human and the Nihilist self-tolerant.

Most apparent in Ullapool, in everyday matters, is the phenomenal increase in the herring trade. This is due to the fishing boats leaving the North Sea to seek out the richer waters of the Minch, between the mainland and the Hebrides. Statistically the picture is good, though one learns it is really a forgery. Ullapool is the major herring port on the North-West Highland coast. It is like a boom town, with an air of surprise at its own activity. Two or three, sometimes four thousand crans of herring are handled daily in the season. Before the war, which initiated the move of ships from East to West, there might have been a few hundred crans, or none at all.

What is less apparent is that the life of Ullapool takes place on two levels, and the herring boom is a deceptive thing if one is to measure Highland recovery in terms of Highland living. The ships that use the port are not local ships; they come from the East coast, and so do the men who handle the herring. When the season is over they go home. Ullapool is useful because of its convenient pier and its road-head. Herring for the home market—"freshing" or "kippering"—are whipped out of town to market. Herring for curing go overseas in barrels. Five curing stations have arisen in the district. The curing firms are all from the East of Scotland. The foreman, the coopers, and the crews of fisher-girls come from Moray or Aberdeenshire, and are as foreign in Ullapool as they would be in Wales.

What one discovers is that the brisk herring trade is a façade behind which the old local life continues to dwindle in vigour. One cannot, in fact, "inject" the Highlands with new life. The old pattern is Gaelic and the language itself, the last cohesive element, is still vanishing rapidly. One man speaks it; his neighbour doesn't. Their children probably don't, though they are taught it at school. Before the herring boom, Ullapool sent its sons and daughters to the cities. The drift has not changed. The long moorland road by Dirrie More to Inverness, travelled by the fast fish lorries, is still the way out for the younger generation. The pattern brought by the herring industry is a foreign pattern, helping to displace the old.

One can see that this process of displacement is likely to happen throughout the Highlands wherever new activities arise. The new undertakings bring their own personnel who will not be absorbed. In the hydro-electricity schemes, for example, the men who dig the tunnels are Scotsmen from the South, Englishmen, Europeans and the hard core of navvy-work, Irish wage-labourers. They lead a semi-monastic life in huts and institutions. The local man, the crofter who can no longer make a go of it, is not prepared to hire himself out, offering brawn for wages and surrendering his family life into the bargain. If he must lose his independence he prefers to do so anonymously, in the cities or abroad.

The impact of "outside" herring workers in Ullapool is to alter the rhythm of the community. It is seen in small things. The traditional village dance is transformed from a mannered gathering, half *ceilidh*, with its roots in the centuries, into a clattering be-bop in boots. Urbanised lowland Scotland overwhelms the withdrawn, reflective culture of the Gael. There is probably very little that can be done about it. The local Highlander, alarmed that his boyhood background is altering before his eyes, puts his last doubts aside, packs a trunk and gets a lift on a fish lorry to Aberdeen. He has gone for good, and may emerge a few years later directing traffic in Piccadilly.

Last year some men, who were not of the North-West, decided to become crofters on one of the isolated peninsulas. Their object was approved in Edinburgh and Glasgow and an *ad hoc* society was formed, negotiations were started with the landowner, and a pioneer group was put on the ground to prepare the way. Various difficulties, which are now unimportant, were encountered, but the unassailable impediment was legal. The landowner, anxious to co-operate, found himself bound by a tangle of legislation originating in the 1886 Crofters Act, a Liberal piece of legislation, nominally passed to protect the crofter but frequently double-edged. The crofts on the peninsula were derelict. The landowner found that he would be committed to heavy payment to the crofters in compensation for land improvement when the leases were relinquished. The society, acting for the potential tenants, sought to waive the right of compensation. They could not do so in law and the scheme was dropped. But by the time this impasse was reached the society, operating in the South through agriculturists, both academic and practical, had a waiting list of between one and two hundred individuals and families, all vetted and passed as suitable crofters. They are still waiting, if they have not emigrated. And the crofts are still derelict.

Elsewhere in the Highlands there are schemes for land development and the settlement of crofters, and they are put into operation fairly speedily, with the Department of Agriculture smoothing the path. What is demanded in many quarters is a coherent Highland policy to end the era of verbose reports, ineffectual schemes and stultified undertakings. Newspapers, public bodies, organisations, both recognised and otherwise, have clamoured at the door of St. Andrew's House for a comprehensive plan integrating the

requirements of the Highlands. They are asking for the moon. Even if one discounts allegations of departmental indifference (who would want to live in that wilderness anyway?) and a tight fist on the purse-strings (the Highland population cannot sway an election) it is unlikely that any Secretary of State could produce such a plan. The situation is full of irreconcilables. Ullapool is a case in point. NEIL MCCALLUM

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight

. . . Down here for a short week-end. Find I am committed, both this afternoon and tomorrow, to play lawn tennis on other people's courts, and secretly wish I wasn't as I should like to hang about here and do nothing in particular. Fortunately I am beginning to adapt my tennis, which used to be strenuous, hard-hitting and inaccurate, to my present style of life, relying more and more on lobs, half-volleys, short cross-court shots, and congratulations to opponents. "Too good!" I cry, and let the point go. But although this will do for tennis, it will not do for everything. I am not to be found everywhere crying "Too good!" and letting the point go. There are one or two drives and smashes of yours that I propose to chase and retrieve—or bust.

Anglo-American Understanding. The more it is advocated, the less there is of it. I see that even Bertrand Russell is telling us: "We ought to employ writers and speakers to represent vividly and simply the problems with which we were faced during the war and at its close, the fatigue of a population which had endured six years of hardship, danger, and grinding toil——" etc., etc. Now I cannot help remembering how, during the war, much the same thing was being said. The average American did not understand the effort we were making. We ought to do something about it. Broadcasting, which kept some of us up until all hours, was not enough. I was asked to write what was in fact the first all-round account of our total war effort for the American public, and for weeks I wrestled with figures and statements trying to produce something vivid and simple. The booklet was splendidly illustrated, and offered to the American public at a low price, less than it cost to publish. Now if, as we had been told, millions of Americans were eager to know what we were doing in the war, then millions of Americans would have rushed to buy this booklet. But they did not. The publication was not a complete flop but the demand for it was certainly disappointing. And now I know why. While many individual Americans want to learn the truth about Britain—and I have always found it easy to make two or three of them in a room understand what we are trying to do—the American public as a public does not want to know and closes its mind against any representations, no matter how vivid and simple, of our problems. Britain exists in the mind of that public as a quaint little country of castles and cottages, decadent dukes and toothless Cockneys, now mysteriously controlled by a few sinister, red-hot Socialists, who might as well be Communists. Any novel, play, film from here that encourages this view of us is delightedly welcomed (and I notice, for example, that Orwell's satirical fantasy is imagined to be a satire on Britain and not on the modern world in general); and anything that sharply challenges this view of us is ignored or shrugged away. It is, of course, ordinary human nature to dislike having one's familiar notions disturbed at all; there is nothing peculiarly American about all this; but it happens, in spite of all the talk about freedom and individuality (and where else do so many people all want to read the same book, see the same play?), that in America the public is very much a public, more easily conditioned than Europeans by mass communication methods.

But Americans speak the same language, more or less, and individually are friendly and sympathetic. So instead of spending more dollars on official propaganda, which is really what Bertrand Russell is suggesting, I would spend far less than we do now—for our Information Service must be expensive—but allow more dollars to be spent by artists, scientists, scholars, students, who wish to visit America. And here I think the Americans themselves could generously co-operate. After all, the dollar shortage itself is a kind of Iron Curtain.

Well, now for the Russians. Unlike so many people apparently, I think it is admirable of the Russians to love Russia. But I happen to be an Englishman, and I love England. I am glad there is in London a Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R., but I feel it is about time that Moscow had a Society for Cultural Relations with Britain, which would enthusiastically explain to the Russians (who seemed to me eager enough as individuals to learn) all the delightful things that are happening in my country, from the latest compositions of Vaughan Williams, Bliss, Walton, Britten to the astonishing number of pretty girls in the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Just as I have long wanted to see the Moscow Art Theatre in London, so I should like to learn that the Old Vic was sailing for Leningrad. I want to take more Russians round this island. I want another holiday in the Caucasus.

Why cannot we try enjoying this world of ours instead of turning it into an old bone and then snarling round it like so many starving dogs? What I am sick to death of—so that soon I may turn anarchist and start throwing bombs at anybody who looks official and important—is the notion that we ordinary human beings are merely so many pawns on the political chess-board. Isms were made for men, not men for Isms. Not one of these faulty and largely improvised systems arrived to us on divine tablets of stone, and no man in his senses would regard any interpretation of them as Holy Writ. It is likely that the amount of human happiness to be derived from any Ism, working at full blast, is negligible when compared with the misery already produced by this quarrel of Isms. We cannot improve our own Ism, which, whatever it is, badly needs improvement, because we are so busy denouncing other people's Isms. Nobody learns anything now. How can anybody teach us anything it we have the perfect Ism? And look what goes on among the Isms! Capitalism regards Socialism and even Liberalism as allied to Communism. But Communism sees Liberalism and Socialism as the mere masks of Capitalism. Again, a Capitalism moving towards Fascism will seem to Liberalism or Socialism to have much in common with Communism.

The more a man writes and talks like this, the less use he is to the real world. I know men of all shades of political opinion who are now so Ismy that they may be said to have stopped thinking. Now and again I receive letters from poor demented creatures who imagine that all the people around them are plotting to kill them, and many of their letters, with their glimpses of strange brutal men staring in the road, of mysterious poisons in the kitchen, are as elaborate and terrifying as a chapter by Kafka. And when I meet or read some of my Ismy acquaintances, I am reminded of these letters, for there is about them more than a suggestion of the same world of rigid attitudes, huge plots, creeping terrors. Moreover, like persecution mania, Ism-ism begins to suck the blood and marrow out of life. The colour goes, as if a Turner watercolour should change into a steel engraving. The fun goes with it, except such fun as can be enjoyed by witch-hunters, inquisitors, the secret police. Human beings are transformed into the crude types of posters and second-rate cartoons. Under the Ism spell, other people's motives for actions are as over-simplified and absurd as they are in a bad detective story. The language belongs to yellowing textbooks and dusty classrooms, but the plots all come from old melodramas. If we are not careful, then very soon the whole lot of us will be compelled to identify ourselves with a pure young girl who is being tied to a railway line by a villain with a dyed moustache. And even the fun of that situation will have been lost in the pedantry and manias of these Ism minds.

Women escape, and might save us yet if they did not regard themselves as hopeless inhabitants of a territory occupied by the army of the masculine principle. Among the letters I have read this morning is one from a young wife, a stranger to me, who boldly declares that with a wonderful husband and a beautiful son ("aged 363 days"—and I like that touch), she finds life, here and now, wonderful and beautiful too; and gives me chapter and verse for it. For her the space-time continuum has burst and flowered into magic, and West London in this year is Paradise enow. I can only hope there are millions like her, girls both good and lucky, and that soon they may decide that the men are going mad and that, like sensible wives and mothers, they must do something about it. But what?

There's the rub. "We women have plenty of initiative," said one of Leacock's characters, "if you'll only tell us what to do." How good—and, I think, strangely under-rated—is Leacock's *Arcadian Adventures With The Idle Rich*! We need scores of such humorists now, men who can make us laugh but yet have an edge to their minds, and there is hardly one in sight. I have never understood the highbrow pretence, which finally led to an honorary degree at Oxford, that Wodehouse amounted to much. He can be exquisitely silly at times but is far too narrow and repetitive. Yet W. W. Jacobs, with far more wit and artistic cunning, was never praised in the circles that exalt Wodehouse. We have of course plenty of sharp little satirists now, but what we want are broader and more forceful writers, genuine humorists, whose object is to make us laugh but who bring to the task minds of a certain size and weight, and, no matter how fantastically they go to work, are clearly writing about our world of today. Some of our comic columnists are nearest the type, but we need more sustained visions of drollery than they give us.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(*From "The New Statesman" of September*, 1924.)

And here's another boon of grinding, anxious, sordid poverty. There is no greater enemy of the soul than sloth; but in this state of ceaseless, dull exasperation, like a kind of grumbling toothache, sloth is impossible. Yet another enemy of the soul is pride, and even the sour, poor man cannot really nourish pride; he may wish to nourish it; he may hope in future to nourish it; but he cannot immediately nourish it. Or, again, the inmost of man which an old superstition called "the Soul" is hurt by luxury. Now poverty, in the long run, forbids or restricts luxury. (HILAIRE BELLOC.)

PORTRAIT OF A PROTESTANT

My Uncle Arthur was a very great walker. You could see him every morning and every evening of every weekday walking the three-mile stretch between his suburban home and his little workshop. You could have set your watch by him; he walked always at the same pace and, it seemed, in the same clothes. In all the thirty years I knew him his dress never altered: a neat, tiny man in dark grey broadcloth, one of those old-fashioned stiff linen collars that lie flat on the collar-bone, revealing a black bow beneath, and wearing always a black velour hat of faintly clerical cut. More than anything else my uncle's appearance suggested the pastor of a small Nonconformist sect so far gone in dissent that its ministry repudiated even the dog-collar as smacking too much of Rome. And of course my uncle was far gone in dissent. He had begun in the Church of England, and with every year of his life he moved farther away from it; he climbed lower and lower, through the Wesleyan Methodists, the United Methodists, the Primitives, slamming behind him in his descent the doors of a succession of chapels and mission-halls because their preachers were too luke-warm in the faith, because the hells they preached were not hot enough or fiery enough, because they elevated mercy above justice; and he ended by touching the bottom of fundamentalism, occupying a pew—but the word would have been anathema to him—in a tin tabernacle, the last Calvinist in England—and still deploring the minister's lack of zeal. But then, my uncle was the most difficult man in the world to preach to.

Obviously there was nothing in the modern world he could approve of. Without ever having seen a film or a play, he knew that they were bad. They were bad because they wasted time and because they were not real. My family as a whole was impatient of feigning, but my father, softer than my uncle, would, though much exasperated by its necessity, lend himself to dissembling once a year and dress up as Father Christmas. The result was almost always unfortunate. The memory that first springs to my mind when Christmas is mentioned is still that of seeing, as a very small child on Christmas night, a red-robed man with a cotton-wool beard come into the parlour with a sack, hearing my eldest brother, aged twelve, giggle and whisper too audibly to my cousin, "It's only Dad!" and then seeing, in utter terror, the sack dropped and the hand that held it come down with a thwack on the side of my brother's head. It was only as Father Christmas that my father ever clouted us. My uncle was wiser. I don't think he ever dressed up as Father Christmas: he would have held that it was acting a lie.

Yet I do not remember that my uncle ever spoke of sin, and I do not believe he really believed in hell-fire. It was just that he wanted everybody to be as uncomfortable as possible; ease, luxury, he held in utmost abhorrence. Nor did he talk of the Devil. The Devil was a reality to him, but not as the horned figure of Satan. His Devil was that incarnation of obscene malignity, John Stuart Mill. One of my earliest recollections of him is of sitting on a boulder surrounded by gorse high over the Barmouth Estuary; two miles away a train puffed across the fascinating wooden viaduct. I was, I suppose, about eight. My uncle was talking to me as though I was twice that age. Solemnly, with the sadness of one who suspects that his fight is hopeless, uncle warned me against the Utilitarians. It was the Utilitarian Philosophy, he explained to me, and how his thin voice was bitter with loathing as he spoke those awful words, which had set the modern world hell-bent upon its pursuit of comfort and pleasure; and the arch-Utilitarian of them all was John Stuart Mill, who had corrupted the modern world into demanding *rights* instead of being content with *duty*. Years after, I realised that what my uncle had treated me to on that superb August evening when the gorse pods popped all round us was pure extract of Carlyle, the mad Carlyle of *Shooting Niagara* and the later essays; for it was Carlyle, always referred to by my uncle either as Mr. Carlyle or The Sage of Chelsea, from whom he had imbibed his creed. And the creed was Work.

But not by any means any kind of work. My uncle was a very proud man and thought it ignoble to work for a boss, though not quite so ignoble to be a boss. He was a master-craftsman, a die-sinker and medal-maker. His workshop consisted of two small rooms in what had once been a Georgian house of some elegance but which was now parcelled out room by room among similar one-man manufactories. Most of my uncle's work was done for the big wholesale silversmiths; but however big they were they could not intimidate him. On one occasion the biggest of them all had sent him an order with the rider that they must have the work by the end of the week. "Must?" said my uncle to their minion; "must?" And he pushed the order form back across his desk. "There must be no *must*. Tell them they will have the work when I have finished it to my own satisfaction or not have it at all."

Because he was a good craftsman, the best probably of an already dwindling number, he could get away with it. He might even have made a modest fortune, but he never took on more work than he himself, a man and a boy could undertake. He wasn't interested in money; he wanted only independence. And he was a single-minded man, unlike my father, who also hated a boss. My father, too, after years of working for bosses, set up his little workshop. But him circumstances defeated. I used to think the circumstances were purely economic. Now I am not so sure, for I have lately learnt that for my father one of the joys of being his own boss was that it gave him all day in which to practice on the fiddle in his workshop. My uncle, of course, scorned the fiddle.

But in this world it is difficult to exclude some degree of pleasure from even the most austere lives. And uncle's pleasure was walking. It was not, of course, pure pleasure. Uncle walked to his work and back every day partly because he didn't want to be beholden to the Corporation tramcars, which in his view were a concession to a generation sapped by the Utilitarian Philosophy. If you wanted to get anywhere, God had given you legs for the special purpose of enabling you to get there. To trains, however, uncle's attitude was less intransigeant. Trains had this one virtue: they would take you to the point at which you could start walking. For uncle was a fanatical worshipper of Nature, and Nature seemed to him much more natural when there were mountains. Therefore he walked in Wales. His itinerary was always the same: by train to Welshpool, then by the light railway to Llanfair Caereinion, and then on foot, down the valleys, over the passes to Dinas Mawddwy and Dolgelly and Barmouth. And he walked through Wales in exactly the same clothes as he walked daily through the town to his workshop: in the dark grey broadcloth, the black velour hat, the stiff flat collar with the bow beneath. In thirty years, whatever the weather, whatever the fashions, he never changed. He was a stickler. At the most, if it was very hot, he carried his hat in his hand. My father was a walker too, though not so wholehearted a one as my uncle, because there were always too many other pleasures in competition with walking; but where dress was concerned he was not a stickler. Once, on a scorching August Bank Holiday, they set out from Dinas together, and before long father took off his hat, and then he discarded his waistcoat, and then he slung his jacket over his arm, and then he tore off his collar and tie; which was too much for uncle, was tripperish behaviour, impudicity even, and his steps grew brisker, his stride longer, until he had left my father half a mile behind. Thus he dissociated himself from my father's lust for comfort.

I have said my uncle worshipped Nature: he ended up, through going there so often, by worshipping Wales as well. I suppose on that fifty-mile stretch of road between Llanfair and Dolgelly there was scarcely a better-known character; everyone knew him and, if he did not know everyone, at any rate he knew all the godly. For when in Wales he worshipped as it were Welsh. He was known in all the tiny stone chapels and I dare say that the fact that he did not know the language merely made the sermons all the more satisfying to him; he could attribute to them whatever quality he wished to find in them; they must have been ideal sermons. Wisely, he never attempted to learn Welsh. If it had been possible, I suspect he would have become a naturalised Welshman, for at the border or possibly a little beyond it, where the light railway finished, the modern world stopped. He found in Wales no insidious infiltration of the Utilitarian Philosophy, and Rousseau on the virtues of the Noble Savage was hardly more eloquent than my uncle on the virtues of the Noble Welsh, men who lived among mountains, knew not comfort, had never heard of John Stuart Mill, and listened twice on Sunday to hell-fire sermons. William Salter

The Arts and Entertainment

RICHARD STRAUSS: 1864-1949

There was something ageless about the patriarch who died on September 8th. When he came to England two years ago, he did indeed look old, very old; but behind the glazed blue eyes and the heavily furrowed mask there played still a restless indestructible intelligence, which found vent in sardonic jokes and a shrewd, disillusioned commentary on the world which he had enjoyed so long and understood so well. Too well, his enemies said, for the health of his music; and it is true that Richard Strauss was a worldly man, lacking that core of simplicity and idealism which is to be found somewhere or other in the very greatest composers; yes, even in Wagner.

Gottfried von Jacquin wrote these words in Mozart's album: "True genius without heart cannot exist—for neither high intelligence, nor imagination, nor both together make genius—Love! love! love! that is the soul of genius!" Vague, indefinable, sentimental as this talk about *Liebe* may sound, by what other name can we describe the quality which we recognise in the finest music of all: again and again in Mozart himself, in Schubert's C major Quintet, in the *St. Matthew Passion* or in the slow movement of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata? It is a quality by no means incompatible with a comic, or even a frivolous, subject: the scores of *Die Meistersinger* and *Cosi fan tutte* are filled with the divine serenity and tenderness that Gottfried von Jacquin must have had in mind. Can any trace of this superlative quality be found in Richard Strauss? He was

prodigiously clever; his imaginative gifts were extraordinary; but only very occasionally do we feel in his music the imprint of ideal beauty. His conscious attempts at spiritual nobility (for example, in the final pages of *Tod und Verklärung* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*) are never convincing; fulsome and rhetorical in the worst German tradition, they tend towards a particularly platitudinous brand of C major diatonicism. Curiously enough, it is when treating material of the least "uplifting" kind that Strauss reaches the greatest heights: in the white-hot intensity of Elektra's hatred, so passionately felt that it becomes almost noble and grand; in the smiling disillusion of the Marschallin; above all, perhaps, in the noble absurdity of the symphonic poem of *Don Quixote*.

Don Juan and *Till Eulenspiegel* are generally considered the greatest of his symphonic poems, and they are certainly brilliant beyond description. *Don Quixote*, on the other hand, falls short of perfection. But there is a rich humanity about this work which places it in another category from those outbursts of youthful genius. Until we know the score well, the introduction seems merely a piece of crazily ingenious patchwork; but the day comes when we hear it played (as it has often been played under Beecham and Strauss himself) with the mad polyphony sweetened and clarified, the crackpot timbres of muted brass standing sharply away from one another, and the solo violin winding in and out of the labyrinth like a quavering old finger tracing the black letters in a mouldering tome; and suddenly we are conscious no longer of the mere ingenuity (fantastic as that is), but of the composer's complete imaginative vision of a human being. Throughout the long work, this impression persists. It was a stroke of genius, far beyond mere cleverness, to have seen the Knight of the Melancholy Countenance in terms of the solo violoncello; that instrument seems now to have been his for ever, like the nag Rosinante. It is difficult to say which we find more touching, the jaunty pathos of the cello's D minor theme as the Don sallies forth, the gigantic wails which follow his last defeat, or the gradual clearing, before his death, of the old idealist's brain: marvellous music, from which a portrait emerges as ripe as though it were signed by Rembrandt.

Pedants and purists are continually explaining to us that music is just music, and notes just notes, anything else being a mere figment of the literary fancy. But the human imagination cannot be sealed off thus into watertight compartments. There is something uncanny about the pictorial, narrative, characterising power of Strauss; it is a mystery, but it is also an aesthetic fact.

Long ago Strauss said of himself that he had begun as a revolutionary, and would end as an old master; and it has often been observed that he began as a romantic and ended as a classic. In one respect, however, he began as he ended: as a humanist, the last of the great German humanist composers. Already in his younger days the trend of music led in other directions: towards nature worship, mysticism or arid mathematical ingenuity. As his popularity grew, the *avant-garde* found it more and more difficult to stomach his opulence and exuberance, his frequent cheerful bouts of sheer bad taste; and the evident decline in his inventive powers during the inter-war period (before the Indian Summer of his last years) obscured for many the fact that he was far the most considerable of living composers. When we think of his total output, with its immense variety and universal appeal, the other leading composers of our time (Sibelius, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Schönberg) seem all slightly parochial. Alongside his contemporaries, Strauss cuts a figure something like that of Mr. Churchill in the world of affairs: whether or not we like the politics of the one or the aesthetic world of the other, both are men built on a larger and more generous scale than is now common. As their detractors always say, they belong to the nineteenth century.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THREE PAINTERS

THERE is nothing particularly original, nothing outstandingly imaginative about the three painters under review; yet each shows a degree of competence that compels acknowledgement. If this temperate quality of calm skill is intermittent in the works of Miss Thalia Malcolm, yet it is she who is on occasion the most rewarding. In her landscapes of the beaches, vineyards and villages near Antibes (at the Lefevre Gallery) she uses colour as a truly sensuous means for evoking form. She strokes her hillsides into existence with a soft brushstroke, capable of rapid expansion from a thin wisp of line into a bold, broad streak charged with considerable plastic force. She has the gift of sweetness of colour: rather in the same way as Renoir, she can state a section of the cloudless sky in the strongest blues, or a shadowed house in crimsons, and still manage to convey—not a scene of unreal, bizarre contrasts, but one caressed by the clear yet creamy light of the Côte d'Azur. The extreme notes, the almost unmodified primaries—blues, yellows, reds—do not, despite their frequency, mean a victory for the decorative over the plastic: she is not to be accused of pulling her compositions together, at the surface of the canvas, by this means. On the contrary, every intensification of hue derives from her visual experience of the subject before her. As she looks at it unfolding in sunny space right back to that natural backcloth of unbelievable, "unnatural," blue-white spikes, the Alpes Maritimes, she discovers these passages of strong colour lurking within the general texture of the visual scene.

If her touch is suggestive—again like Renoir, or Derain—of the tactile quality of her subjects, she has as yet too insecure a sense of the structure of things. Her houses are almost invariably wrong in drawing. With ease her tactile scribble evokes the volumes of a succession of soft, rounded objects like olive trees: but the angles of walls and roofs fox her. She is naive, too, in the matter of foregrounds: the rows of little vines suddenly splay out frantically, to right and left, as they arrive within 50 yards of the artist's viewpoint. Worse still, however, are her still lives. With an inability to construct solids securely (she gains solidity in the landscapes not by construction, but by imitating the natural disposition of forms) she can invent nothing more interesting, when it comes to still life, than a soft sphere (a bowl of flowers) hovering in the angle of two flat planes (a table next to a bare wall).

Mr. L. Petley-Jones, whose rather *Fauve* paintings of—presumably—the Thames somewhere near Henley are to be seen at Gimpel Fils, has all the ability for organisation which Miss Malcolm lacks. Indeed this ability has crystallised into something that, in one or two pictures, looks too much like a formula. If her dithering among the angles of the roof-tops of Cagnes or St. Paul is offset by a tenderness of vision, his slick marshalling of perspectives is only made tolerable by the terrific gusto of his large and small oblong touches of thick paint. Brilliant in colour, these square and oblong blobs execute the most energetic yet accomplished dance. Deriving from the early *Fauve* Vlamincks, these pictures of boathouses, willows, piers and a regatta have all the certainty which roots in a sound tradition bestow. Mr. Petley-Jones, having chosen his idiom, finds himself free to concentrate upon subtleties of light and movement—things that he observes with accuracy and energy. Since he is not an inventor of new formal devices, nor a daring creator of new, poetic versions of the familiar; since he is in fact handling a familiar imagery in a familiar manner, he stands or falls by the sheer virtuosity, the intense, personal zest of the performance. To me it seems that he is the best executant of this particular *Fauve* dance that we have seen for some time.

At the Hanover Gallery Mr. Stanley Squire's paintings of bundles of butchers' meat-hooks, with a grinding-stone for company, or of bathers by a swimming-pool, have an air of grey patience which neither subject nor treatment quite succeeds in dispelling. That he puts the paint on rather beautifully is not enough: indeed the pleasure he takes in achieving his dry, tight surface is, one feels, something of a diversion; it distracts one's attention from more important matters—as it probably did the painter's. If you are beginning to admire the austere drawing and the grave tonalities you will be less inclined to worry about the slightly ridiculous subject matter or the curious false *lightness* of what ought to be normally dense and solid forms. There is the feeling that the artist's real experience is more visual than imaginative (more to do with a straight statement of what the eye sees than with strange poetic presences), but that he is dissatisfied with this state of affairs and has sought to pull and push his figures into shapes which he has not really experienced—with an inner *or* an outer eye.

PATRICK HERON

TELEVISION

ONE reason why wireless Variety is so poor is the customary presence at the producing-end of the studio-audience. The excuse for their intrusion is that radio comics (unlike the far greater ones of the cinema) need moral support in order to be funny. One result, as we at our firesides can bitterly testify, is that the comic is tempted to play to the visible claque and not the invisible millions. The studio-audience, which has so long corrupted broadcast Variety, is now infiltrating into television as well. One lamentable example of the false values its presence promotes occurred recently when a cabaret show expensively imported for an hour from Copenhagen, delivered some very shoddy goods at Alexandra Palace. It was noisy, low-level, concert-party stuff, modelled on the slap-dash American style, and I find that my own distaste for this performance was extensively shared by other viewers. Yet in order to stampede us into the delusion that we were having fun a platoon of the Danish community in London was enrolled to sit-in at the cabaret, and patriotically proceeded to deafen us with incontinent laughter and clapping after every item. A similar claque is being employed in another television Variety show, *Magic Carpet*, which fabricates synthetic cabarets from Cairo or Rio and, again, seeks to prejudge its effect upon the viewer by this old "*Sieg Heil!*" technique. In this show there is not only a troupe of house-trained clappers but also a cheer-leader who, after each turn, looms before our gaze making excessive gestures and noises of unmerited approval. These antics defeat their purpose, for while viewers are ready to be led to laughter they refuse to be druv. There is no substance, to my mind, in the notion that only a visible audience can incite a comedian to be amusing. If cinema clowns can do their stuff stone-cold under the cynical eye of their director, why not television funnies as well? What is at present dished-up in most televised Variety—not all, but most—is phoney entertainment.

Even if the pianist is doing his best, it is sometimes advisable that he should be shot. *The Painter at Work* invites such prompt despatch of whoever conceived it, for it is a series which has failed from the start. The demonstration has revealed next to nothing of the problems and dilemmas which confront the painter. There he stands at his easel, not very sure whether his task is to teach amateurs to paint or National Gallery crawlers to observe what they see. I am now going to give a bit more radiance, he says, to this shadow; whereon he turns to his canvas, does a bit of brush-work, and stands aside for us to observe the effect. And, of course, there is nothing whatsoever to be observed from where we sit in our parlours, for the screen cannot cope with the niceties of an artist's palette. There are better ways of presenting the visual arts, and better teachers to be found. The pot-bound producers of Alexandra Palace might profitably visit a few Art Schools to discover some of the

modern methods of explaining what art is about. Meanwhile there are other arts waiting for screen-demonstration—architecture, sculpture, domestic and commercial design. The only successes in this field, so far, are the adroit displays of women's fashions. But if the arts languish in television, science prospers. The exploration of the Moon was a brilliant and exciting venture, and the visit of the mobile-unit to a carbon dioxide factory—so excellently conducted by Richard Dimbleby—was another rewarding excursion. My final sentence must be a word of heartfelt praise to the back-room boys who have lately achieved such a striking improvement in the clarity of the images we see. W. E. WILLIAMS

THE MOVIES

"Moonrise"

"The Dark Past," at the London Pavilion

"The Hasty Heart," at the Warner

The best film of recent weeks, denied a West End run and distribution on any of the major circuits, achieves only what the trade calls a "floating release"—which means that it may appear at a few independent cinemas moved to show it. *Moonrise* (meaningless title) is the latest film of Frank Borzage, a director who did well in the Thirties with such films as *A Farewell to Arms* and *Man's Castle*, but then turned his hand to so many pot-boilers that one had almost forgotten his existence. Now his new film, made independently with very limited resources at a small Hollywood studio, shows that Borzage as a creative personality is still very much alive. The story, in outline, may not sound much: a greater originality lies in the setting—a remote village by the swamplands of Virginia—and the characterisation of an isolated local community. Danny (Dane Clark), whose father was hanged for murder, has grown up in the shadow of social inferiority, embittered by provincial gossip and malice. One evening the banker's loutish son begins to taunt him, and provokes him to murder. He is suspected, but without proof; and the drama centres on Danny's conscience and final purgation, through the efforts of a few friends—a wise and melancholy negro hermit, beautifully played by Rex Ingram, his girl (Gail Russell), and the laconic, sympathising sheriff (Allyn Joslyn)—to make him confess rather than flee and be hunted.

All this is told with a unity of mood, sombre and poignant, set by some impressionistic opening passages and sustained by the slow yet firmly compressed style and the strong, low-toned images. Borzage is a romanticist, but he does not over-simplify: the scene where the lovers visit a fairground and circumstances cause the nervous, inarticulate young man to undergo a whole series of conflicting tensions is done with remarkable skill. He brings a sardonic humour to the portrait of a little town, lethargic and turned in on itself, and finds a poetic contrast in the derelict mansion on the edge of the swamp where Danny meets his girl at night and dances with her. There is a touching sadness also in the strange deaf-mute to whom Danny is attracted because he too is an outcast. One regrets only a brief emotional flaw caused by Ethel Barrymore, who plays Danny's grandmother with portentous theatricality and the intonation of a female King Lear.

The other new films are exercises in convention. The more adept of them, *The Dark Past*, has a situation similar to that of *The Small Voice*, less excitingly written and handled: but William Holden is excellent as the escaped killer who breaks into the weekend lodge of a lecturer in psychology, played by the impressive Lee J. Cobb, and the analysis that follows is of more interest than usual. *The Hasty Heart* is photographed theatre of the old-fashioned kind—old-fashioned also in its ruthlessly sentimental little episode of camaraderie and stiff upper lips in an army hospital. As the lonely, prickly young Scotsman doomed to die of kidney trouble, Richard Todd shows ability. GAVIN LAMBERT

"BLAUE REITER" IN MUNICH

PAINTING in modern Germany has had unbelievably bad luck. It had its quota of genius, for the first time, at the start of the century; and it was no more national than the school of Paris. In the Munich of 1910—the year before the *Blaue Reiter* broke away—the *Neue Kuenstler Vereinigung* had Italians, Russians, French and Austrians in its membership and all the new Paris masters as its guests. The war broke the development and Marc and Macke disappeared. Then in the Twenties Germany was split between the Europeans—the Bauhaus, where painting was peripheral—and the Expressionists, the former *Bruecke* group. The last were "too German," there were too many resentments abroad and Paris dealers held monopoly. It was only in Klee's and Kandinsky's following that painting out of Germany at last became acceptable—by 1933.

To-day the movement is picking itself up for the third time and looking back to its origins. Hence the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition organised by Dr. Ludwig Grote which opened on September 3rd at the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* in Munich. One's first feeling, though, is that there is far too much Franz Marc. These cows and horses are like bright balloons. What has been called his "sentimental cubism" is stylised *à l'Art Nouveau*. The shade of Boecklin is perceptible . . . Then one comes to Marc's last few canvases and sees that this was the nonage of a genius, who died before his work had properly begun. His last abstraction, uncompleted, joins organic with dynamic qualities as Europe would not see it done again until Hartung's time in Paris after the second war.

Kandinsky, on the other hand, was able to go on through war and revolution. But when the Soviet authorities had their first fit of iconoclasm and he was driven back to Munich in 1921 he found it changed. Catholic pressure was driving out the Jews and without them art was falling dead. Kandinsky moved on to Berlin. Only the paintings he had done in Munich have not changed. The "Impressions," "Improvisations" and "Compositions" from that time, or the great *Black Curve* (so lately shown at Maegt's in Paris), all are fresh and brilliant in the present show. They still point the way to a new plastic or—as he would say—a spiritual development. The young Germans look at them with open mouths as their fathers did forty years ago. It is the city which Kandinsky loved and thought so beautiful, which wanted none of him, that has gone to ruin, spiritual as much as physical.

By a freak of history, Klee did not show at the *Blaue Reiter* in 1911. He is represented in the Album only by a little watercolour. But as of right he is the third point of focus now—and perhaps the most intense—with some forty pictures of the period. True, it was Kandinsky who liberated Klee, not by his forms but by the example of his colour; Klee's work before 1914 was relatively less important to the whole. But the central radiance of the Tunisian watercolours makes "cold fireworks" still out of the Kandinsky oils. The psychic depth and range of the tiny compositions include everything from the growth of life to the music of Mozart, from metaphysics to the collective unconscious. They stretch the frontiers of painting further than ever before. No wonder that on the new German painters since the war—Fritz Winter, Fietz, Cavael and the older Baumeister—Klee is the basic influence.

The fourth member of the first quadrumvirate, Robert Delaunay, stands up less well than the others. The various versions of the *Tour Eiffel*, *Ste. Séverin* and the *Troix Fenêtres* look flimsy now and the interminable *Circles* which followed them monotonous. Even their colour will not stand the competition of Jawlensky's scarlet and turquoise, black and purple, glowing on the wall nearby. But one can see what their fascination was for the painters of the *Blaue Reiter*, even while they left his Paris cold. Delaunay is chromatic, dynamic, structure-of-space—everything needed as a counterweight to Cubist monumentality. If the *Blaue Reiter* and the Futurists (who exhibited in Munich, 1912), had been able to press through with their developments this might have been the other side of European art—and the nineteen-twenties less one-sided than they were.

JOHN THWAITES

"Romeo and Juliet," at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich

The Maddermarket is often described as an Elizabethan playhouse, but the term is misleading: for although Mr. Monck has preserved the architectural features of Shakespeare's stage, he has so modified them by the addition of painted scenery and artificial lighting that his stage is very different in aspect from any that an Elizabethan audience saw.

Romeo and Juliet does not show his stage-craft at its best. It is perhaps a small thing that the backcloth of Verona has an odd perspective—when the actors stand against it, they look grotesquely tall. It is more serious that the use of the balcony and the inner stage is at one point strange enough to break the dramatic illusion—Juliet helps Romeo to get down from the balcony on one side of the stage, and a few seconds later is discovered in bed on the lower part of the opposite side of the stage: the visual contrast is abrupt and disturbing. It is disturbing too that in the final (crypt) scene there appears a confusion of style. The feeling of the quattrocento, which is present elsewhere, gives way in that scene to a suggestion of the Pre-Raphaelites.

In this choral outpouring of the young Shakespeare's fancy the verse speaking is the most important thing of all. The Norwich Romeo (anonymous, like all the players), playing his first big part, made a gallant effort: he shirked none of the difficulties. Juliet weakened the effect of her performance by dropping her voice at the end of a line. The first scene in Capulet's house, the ball and the discovery of Juliet after the potion scene were the passages in which the dramatic pattern was most expressively drawn.

FORESIGHT

We used to know a lecturer on current affairs who never mounted the rostrum without an up-to-date copy of KEESING'S. With KEESING'S at his elbow, he was for ever armed with evidence on all the latest developments in national and international Politics, Economics, Social Questions—ready to cap any impromptu question promptly with a conclusive fact.

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Correspondence

FASCISTS AND POLICE

SIR,—As a reporter on a national daily newspaper, who has covered some 30 of the Hackney and Dalston battles in the last two years, I can say quite coldly that the behaviour of police attending Fascist meetings is openly pro-Fascist and anti-Semitic. This is, maybe, a "grave allegation" and a "serious charge against our Metropolitan Police Force." I do not mean it to be so. I have continually to deal with high Scotland Yard officials and detectives. I find them, mostly, very pleasant and helpful people, doing a difficult job with almost maximum efficiency.

But consider this. In Dalston Lane, Hackney, one recent Sunday, I watched the beginning of counter marches by "Union Movement" members and anti-Fascists. A youth appeared, running for his life, pursued by about 20 men. One of the pursuers was swinging a car starting-handle, and two more had knuckle dusters.

There were thirty-two policemen (I checked the figures with a senior local police officer) standing within 30 feet.

They watched this youth being tripped, beaten with the starting handle, and kicked in the ribs. His glasses were smashed, one eye closed, and his forehead cut, as far as I could see, in about three places. Those who attacked him ran off down the street without one police hand raised to stop them. But the man on the road was picked up bodily, slung into the police van, and threatened with a truncheon. A policeman shouted "get in, you Yiddish bastard." It's hard to believe that. It's hard to believe also, that this man, set upon by thugs, was later charged with creating a disturbance.

It was quite clear to me, and to several other experienced observers from other London papers, that in the first instance, the police deliberately held off until the man had had a severe beating. I put the matter to an inspector at the Fascist meeting in Ridley Road, E., half an hour later. "If a few more of the bleeders got that treatment, we'd be freer of Jews along here," he said.

I wish to make it quite clear that I am neither Jew nor Communist. I am a Socialist who firmly believes that Communism is an ephemeral fallacy. But I know a middle-aged Jewish woman, who was moved along by the police, was speaking the truth when she said to me, "A Jew daren't go out here on a Sunday night. I don't look too Jewish. I can keep my face covered up anyway, when it's pretty dark."

I cannot believe there are Whitehall instructions for the police to behave like this in a Jewish community. But there is an explanation and it cannot be a pleasant one.

JOHN HADLOW

Fleet Street.

STRANGE MAGISTRATE

SIR,—I notice that your timely comment upon the strange decisions of Mr. Malone coincided with a protest demonstration outside the North London Court by the 43 Group. Such protests are not surprising, for the cases you mention are only the most recent of a series. The following examples are merely a few taken from press reports of cases in Mr. Malone's Court since he was appointed.

In October, 1948, Franklin, who was one of a large group trying to assault people leaving an anti-Fascist meeting, *pleaded guilty* to using insulting words and behaviour and to having in his possession offensive weapons, namely an empty bottle and an imitation firearm. He was also seen to throw a stone. Mr. Malone, discharging him, said: "You are entitled to hold your views and express them in public. Anybody who tries to stop you . . . will be punished."

Last week, two anti-Fascists also pleaded guilty to possessing offensive weapons (three pebbles) and threatening behaviour (throwing a piece of wood) respectively and were sentenced to one and two months' imprisonment.

In October, 1948, a man called Doyle was arrested by a detective whom he had unfortunately mistaken for what the police evidence reported him as calling "the dirty b . . . s of the 43 Group." He, too, *pleaded guilty* to using insulting words and behaviour. Mr. Malone discharged him with the words: "You are entitled to express your opinions about this meeting or any other meeting."

Last week, an anti-Fascist, who pleaded *not guilty* to the same charge and who was also only expressing his opinions, was sentenced to imprisonment for six weeks.

In July of this year, a past if not present member of Mosley's Union Movement called Roberts, appeared before Mr. Malone. He was found guilty of maliciously wounding a heckler at a meeting. Mr. Malone fined him 25s. But an anti-Fascist was fined £10 merely for possessing a similar weapon.

On more than one occasion, moreover, Mr. Malone has referred to the war record of anti-Fascist defendants in terms which go beyond the limits of decency, especially in the case of one who served in the Pioneer Corps.

Surely such examples of Mr. Malone's judicial record should be considered carefully by the Home Secretary? The published reports seem to constitute a *prima facie* case for an official inquiry.

ERIC BLOCH

15 Esmond Road,
Bedford Park,
London, W.4.

THE ROBESON RIOT

SIR,—May I add to Critic's comments on the Robeson Riot? Some weeks ago the Civil Rights Congress (which has been pronounced subversive by former Attorney-General Tom Clark) arranged an open-air concert to raise funds, with Paul Robeson as the star attraction. A veterans' association, the American counterpart of the British Legion, announced that the concert was Communist inspired and it was the duty of every veteran in the community to make sure that it would not take place. The local veterans vowed that Robeson would not sing. And he did not. A mob of hoodlums, encouraged by their complete success in having the concert cancelled on the spot for safety reasons, and incited by yells of "Let's lynch him" tried to surround Robeson. But protected by some of his supporters he escaped to his car, promising to return the following Sunday and that the concert would then be held.

On that Sunday morning I motored up to Peekskill. Dozens of buses were chartered to take people to the concert. Many went up by car and some by train. In all 25,000 people demonstrated their belief that force can only be matched by force and that the testing ground for their belief would be the old golf course at Peekskill. The American Labour Party arranged for the personal protection of people at the concert. Baseball bats and golf clubs were the order of the day. On arriving at Peekskill the concert-goers found the streets lined by columns of jeering inhabitants. To ensure peace and satisfy the public conscience 1,200 special police were summoned to duty. Their first act was to relieve the trippers of the baseball bats and golf clubs, often to straightfaced protestations by their owners that they had come to play baseball and golf. Thus they were denied from the outset any means of protection other than their bare fists. 3,000 of Robeson's huskiest followers formed a large circle round the area where the concert was to be held. Some two hundred yards away on the main road the veterans marched up and down carrying banners "Wake up America" and "Peekskill! don't let America Down." At first they shouted anti-Communist slogans, then anti-Negro and finally anti-Semitic. The latter came as a shock to several Jewish veterans taking part who had naively believed that this American brand of Fascism was not anti-Semitic and who had hastened to get aboard the band waggon. The Fascist salute was used freely and the police complacently looked on. Attempts were made by the veterans to break through the police lines.

The trouble started after the concert ended. The veterans lined the road leading from the golf course. They formed a gauntlet which the concert-goers would have to run to get to their buses and cars. And in their hands were bricks and stones. The police commissioner stood up and asked them not to throw the stones. The veterans laughed and proceeded to hurl the missiles into the merging crowd. The concert-goers tried to defend themselves against the veterans but discovered they would have to guard themselves from the police who used their sticks to beat down any protective action taken by the trippers.

After a while, the veterans, obviously acting in accordance with a pre-arranged plan, stopped the offensive and permitted the trippers to get to their vehicles. They took up fresh positions on both sides of the road leaving Peekskill. Every bus and car passing along the road was subjected to a barrage of stones. The buses travelled with the passengers lying on the floor. Not one bus returned to New York without having had most of its windows broken. Any car which was forced to stop because of injury to the driver was quickly surrounded and turned over on its side. Whenever the concert-goers attempted to come to grips with the veterans they were clubbed by the police and dragged away. Over 100 people were taken to Peekskill Hospital for treatment. Some were admitted to New York hospitals. Throughout the whole incident the 1,200 police watched and took absolutely no action against the veterans except in one instance where some stones were thrown and hit policemen who, feeling obliged to take some sort of action, arrested several veterans including the son of the Peekskill chief of police, who was promptly released in the custody of his father. When the last of the audience had left, the mob turned their attention onto Peekskill undesirables—namely Negroes and Jews. A Jewish summer camp was attacked and a cross burned—ominous of sympathy with the Klan. This was the climax to the evening's excitement and afterwards the veterans disbanded and went home.

The leaders of the veterans, whilst apologising the following day for the injuries to women and children said that Robeson provoked it by singing in a locality where he did not belong. It appears, therefore, that the veterans' associations can now determine whether a musical concert held by people with different political and racial concepts than themselves may take place or not, and if so whether it will do so peacefully.

DOCTOR

New York. (Name and address enclosed)

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PROFESSOR BERNAL

SIR,—In your issue of Sept. 3, Critic brings out very clearly some of the untruths which find ready acceptance to-day. Professor Bernal is taken to task for saying that Stalin was "a great leader and protector of science." But it seems to me that this assertion is quite true. Stalin has been acknowledged a great leader by his enemies as well as by his friends. He is also keenly interested in science and engineering and, even if he has not personally made scientific discoveries, his work as head of the Government which took a major share in smashing Fascism can surely entitle him to be regarded as a protector of civilisation and therefore of science. The "London Diary" also describes Bernal as silly because he asserts that directing minds in the West hate peace and want war; the truth you claim is that both sides just find themselves preparing war against each other, presumably without those directing minds in the West wanting war at all. That seems to me an interpretation of the situation quite out of accord with well-established facts. The Government of the U.S.A. is maintaining military bases thousands of miles from its own country. The Government of the U.S.S.R. is not doing so. The U.S.A. has actually used the atom bomb on virtually defenceless populations and threatens to do so again. The U.S.S.R. has not done so. The war hysteria created by spokesmen of the American Government is well known; all visitors to the U.S.S.R. are impressed by the complete absence of war talk and the attitude that anyone who does engage in creating war hysteria must be a criminal lunatic. The last of these well-established facts which I wish to mention is that war is extremely profitable to great industrialists and devastating to ordinary people. The real controllers of the U.S.A. and this country are the great industrial and financial interests, not the mass of ordinary people. Moreover these same people indirectly control science through the allocation of funds for scientific research.

Finally, I must protest against the introduction of the word "sycophant" as applied to Bernal. I am aware that Critic says he "had never thought of Bernal as a sycophant" but that does not make the use of the word any more justified. Bernal may, in the opinion of some people, exaggerate, but there can hardly be any who doubt his honesty of purpose.

Cambridge. W. A. WOOSTER

[Critic writes: "I never dreamt of doubting Bernal's honesty of purpose. I protested at his use of loose and sycophantic language on an occasion when he had a chance of telling people in Moscow some of the complex truth."—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

THE SILENCED SERVICE

SIR,—The vote in the Trade Union Congress against the terms of the Masterman Report on political activities of Civil Servants brings out aspects of this matter which so far have received little attention.

In paragraph 56, p.20 of the report, the Committee give their reasons for extending further the political liberties which industrial Civil Servants already enjoy. They say: "The objections felt by members of the Blanesburgh Committee to extending the same rights to all industrials seems to us to have lost their force now that industrial staffs are more highly organised and now that Departmental industrials have probably greater cohesion with industrial employees in other Departments than with the other grades in their own Department. We therefore recommend that all industrials be allowed to stand for Parliament without resigning unless and until elected." The operative words here are "now that industrial staffs are more highly organised." Also operative are words which do *not* appear but which might read as follows: "Now that Departmental industrials have probably greater cohesion with industrial employees *outside* the Civil Service." The freedom accorded to Post Office workers is not unconnected with their Trade Union affiliations. Note also the caste barrier implied in the words "greater cohesion with industrial employees . . . than with other grades in their own Department."

Allies outside the Civil Service are, in fact, what Civil Servants greatly need at this juncture. Facile jokes at the expense of the Civil Servant obscure the real issues: the Civil Servant is employed not by the Government but by the general public, who have a duty to inform themselves as to the conditions of service of their employees.

The limited functions and small numbers of the old Civil Service are a thing of the past. Public ownership and control must inevitably mean that increasing numbers of professional, technical and skilled people—some of the country's best brains—are employed by the State, and their work increasingly affects the lives of individual members of the community. Is this Service to be a soulless bureaucracy of political and intellectual eunuchs, or is it to be a human organisation truly representative of the public whom it serves? For this is the issue.

As more power is held by the State, then it matters profoundly what Government we have. Men and women Civil Servants, who must certainly unquestioningly carry out Government policy, yet who are allowed none of the normal rights of the citizen in local and national government elections other than the mere casting of their votes, are bound to develop a mood of frustrated cynicism. If they may not speak or write on matters of political or public importance, not even their own wages and conditions, to what state of servitude are we tending? We have already seen a woman Civil Servant reprimanded for writing on equal pay.

D. B. C.

BANKS AND UNIONS

SIR,—In your issue of September 10, you referred to the resentment expressed at the T.U.C. Conference because the National Union of Bank Employees could not obtain recognition by the Joint Stock Banks. In this matter you take sides with the Trade Union, but are you fully and correctly informed? In the first place the individual Staff Associations are not, as you state, maintained by the Banks. These Associations are maintained by their members on a subscription-paying basis, and nothing is more clearly understood than the right of members of Bank Staffs to exercise completely free choice in joining their own Staff Association, the outside Trade Union, both, or neither.

The Banks might be deserving of your censure for not recognising the Trade Union if it could show a majority membership, but the fact is that although Bank men and women have been wooed and cajoled by the outside organisation for over 30 years an overwhelming majority remain steadfast in their refusal to be drawn into such an organisation, well knowing that it is inappropriate to their needs.

The membership of Staff Associations represented by the Central Council of Bank Staff Associations is in the region of 50,000, excluding Scotland with a separate Staff Association membership of 7,553. The Trade Union claims a membership of 29,000. This includes Scottish members, messengers, pensioners and employees of concerns like the Co-operative Wholesale Society! The membership weakness of the Trade Union in the Clearing Banks is therefore much greater than that indicated by the comparative figures quoted. The Union has declined, although invited again and again, to analyse its membership figures, so that we do not know how many members they have in individual Banks. Perhaps this letter will prompt them to let the public know, for instance, how many members they have in the nationalised Bank of England upon whose Court of Directors they are seeking a job for one of their boys.

A. W. B. PAYNE,
Secretary.
Central Council of Bank Staff Associations.

"NO REPLY"

SIR,—If Mr. Driberg's verses refer to me, he is quite wrong. We are excellently provided for here: the cellar is full: the bells work perfectly and provoke an instant response. Footmen have been a difficulty, but the Ministry have been very good. The butler, of course, has gone, but as he is now in the catering business he lets us have a lot of little extras.

Nevertheless, if I have been the occasion of allowing Mr. Driberg to rid himself of any of the spleen that encumbers him, I count that a service to the rest of us. The context of an emetic is unimportant; but may I point out to those with more digestive minds that the subject in the *Spectator* was not householde: but holidays—and for many people holidays mean hotels.

EVAN JACK
Barnston Old Rectory, Dunmow, Essex.

THE PIDDINGTON ACT

SIR,—In an article concerning our eighth broadcast with the B.B.C., in which you took part as a judge, you made several statements which, I feel, require some reply from us, and so, though appreciating the general kindness of your remarks about us, I now intend to reply.

You complain that in this broadcast "every second of the time was precisely mapped out"; that "it was Major Dautry and not I who pointed to the tunes" which Lesley was to receive; that "neither I nor anyone else except Mr. Piddington and Major Dautry had had the opportunity of seeing the cards"; that "I had no chance of checking whether the cards I took from the pack were actually the ones transmitted"; that the tests were less impressive than they might have been because "I did not pick myself" all the subjects for transmission.

Now may I, Mr. Kingsley Martin, answer these complaints? First of all, that every second was precisely mapped out. I am led to believe that in their programme planning the B.B.C. adhere to a most rigid time-table, and therefore "mapping out" is quite essential. In fact, some members of the B.B.C. production staff even carry stop watches for this specific purpose at all rehearsals, and on two occasions—a fact quite well known in some circles—our programme was even faded out for exceeding those very seconds you mention.

Next, Sir, you state it was Major Dautry and not you who picked the tunes. On that score I have three remarks to make. First of all, the duties of judges are assigned by the B.B.C. producers, not by myself (so that it is quite possible that all the Major's duties in the eighth broadcast could quite easily have been allotted to you, and all yours, Sir, to the Major—which gives rise to the interesting query "Would the Major then have written to *The Times* and complained about the role of Mr. Kingsley Martin?"). Secondly, I must state that the fact that the Major is a friend of mine in no way detracts from the other fact that he was still quite the best person to introduce our final broadcast—since without his encouragement in Changi gaol our demonstrations would never have been developed as entertainment, and consequently would never even have reached the B.B.C. Of its value as entertainment the Major was one of the few people who never had any doubts; as to whether or not we achieved our results by telepathy the Major has always been (in common with all those who witnessed our demonstrations in Changi) our severest critic. And finally, Sir, I must state that the Major's name is not "Dautry," but Daltry—I consider accuracy in reporting all essential in any criticisms advanced about our show.

To the complaint that neither you nor anyone else had the opportunity of seeing the cards you dealt from a sealed pack (handled, broken and shuffled, I would remind you, Sir, by you alone) I say this: *that* was entirely the point of the test! So many pressmen, of whom you, Sir, are one, have suggested that information was passed on by an accomplice, that we, in this our last broadcast, were determined that no accomplice—not even you, Sir—should know what to pass on. Accordingly the cards remained unknown until Major Daltry showed them to me and to those audience members on the same side of the studio as the one on which he and I stood. You, Sir, unfortunately, sat on that side of the studio where my wife stood—accordingly you did not see those cards, for we allowed no one on Lesley's side of the studio (accomplices again, you see) to know what was being transmitted. At the conclusion of the test, however, you were at complete liberty to examine not only Major Daltry's five cards but also the residue of the pack which you held in your own pocket—or had you, Sir, forgotten that? And, moreover, you no doubt do recollect that you and I did, in fact, examine the residue of that pack at the conclusion of the broadcast, which would have been a most foolish thing to do had the cards which I allegedly transmitted to my wife been not, as was supposed, in Major Daltry's possession, but in actual fact reposing quietly all the time in *your* pocket. I refuse to believe, Sir, that a man of your reputed acumen could examine forty-seven cards and utterly fail to notice, among those forty-seven, five more that should not have been present. The only conclusion, therefore, my dear Sir, is that if Major Daltry was an accomplice in this test, then so, Mr. Kingsley Martin, were you!

In other words, it is quite as ludicrous for you to imply that any result we achieved was the work of a conniving Major Daltry as it would have been for Major Daltry to have implied that other results were equally the work of a conniving Kingsley Martin.

Next, Sir, I should like to point out that your view that the criticisms of several well-known columnists and newspapers were never answered by us is *not* one shared by our listeners, who wrote in their thousands to say that (in their opinion, of course) we had, in our series, blown those criticisms sky high. But then perhaps, Mr. Kingsley Martin, you did not listen to the rest of our series, so that you did not know?—although I can scarcely credit that so eminent a journalist as yourself would base his written and published opinions merely upon what the law scathingly refers to as "hearsay."

In that connection, of course, your remarks about Commander Campbell were particularly unfortunate because—relying as you did on a mis-reported statement by Arthur Helliwell (does Mr. Helliwell always so mis-report statements, I wonder? I do hope not)—you quoted the Commander as saying that, in a test in which he participated, he "cheated and peeped." Of course what the Commander actually said (and for this information we went not to a newspaper but to the Commander himself) was that he *could* have peeped, and thus guessed more easily, even though he he did *not*, in fact, peep, and still "guessed" correctly!

Finally, Sir, there is one faint note of inconsistency in your article. When Major Daltry picks something, it is suspect. When an audience member picks something, that, too, is suspect. Yet in one of our tests, described by you, you stated that because *you* had *not* picked the subject *that* test was not impressive—in other words, Sir, whilst everyone else who participates in any way in any test (according to you) is either a friend or an accomplice, or a suspected friend or accomplice, *you* alone play the role of Cæsar's wife! Major Daltry, the audience, twenty million listeners could all individually, of course, say the same thing. That they don't is forbearing of them but rather a good thing.

No, Mr. Kingsley Martin; like everyone else, you are entitled to your opinion: we still say "You are our judge"; but your article about our broadcast was not a very sound one, and I felt that the least I could do was to write and to say so.

SYDNEY PIDDINGTON

294 Earls Court Road,
S.W.5.

[Mr. Kingsley Martin writes: Mr. Piddington is here skilfully adopting for the press the illusionist's technique of distracting attention by irrelevant patter. I made no "complaints" about the Piddingtons' show. On the contrary. My only complaint was that the B.B.C., by inviting "judges" and by articles in the *Radio Times*, had given the impression that the Piddington Act was "telepathic." The Piddingtons make no such claim, and on every point in this letter Mr. Piddington precisely confirms what I said. Let me briefly reply to his points:

(1) Mr. Piddington agrees with me that every moment was precisely mapped out, as it obviously must be in an entertainment programme, and that no possible opportunity was given to a judge to intervene. My concern was to explain to people who either accuse the Piddingtons of "fraud" or me of gullibility or failure to act as a "judge" that these are irrelevant criticisms of a slick conjuring performance in which the judges were merely, like many other supernumeraries present, doing and standing where they were told on a carefully planned stage.

(2) Mr. Piddington says that, on my argument, I might have been an accomplice. Just so. I agree. I cited the fact that the second judge and people who took a hand from the audience were old friends of Mr. Piddington merely to prove the complete absence of the "precautions" to which Mr. Piffard referred in his *Radio Times* article. This is also the answer to Mr. Piddington's final point in which he makes remarks about me as "alone playing the role of Cæsar's wife." "Twenty million listeners" without any idea of the conditions could not know that a judge *might* be an accomplice and that, as far as the judge could tell, there could have been a score of methods of signalling, mechanical or otherwise, between the Piddingtons.

(3) The conjurer comes out beautifully when Mr. Piddington, smartly distracting the reader's eye from the point of the card trick, points out that I did, in fact, look at the cards after the performance and failed to notice whether the pack contained the cards which Lesley had identified. Note I did not say that Major Daltry (I apologise for mis-spelling his name) was an accomplice, but that, as far as any tests went, he might have been. That would only have been one way of doing the trick; several others will occur to any listener once he realises that the person who originally picked the cards did not see them and so could not tell whether the ones he chose were those "transmitted." After all, any expert conjurer could have substituted one set of five cards for another. Note too that this was the final trick so that we were switched off the air directly after Lesley named the cards. Mr. Piddington now adds an amusing point, confirming my belief that the cards chosen were not those "transmitted." It is true that there was a danger that the judge with the cards in his pocket might check up even in the bustle after the show. This no doubt explains why Mr. Piddington came over to examine the cards with me! I was slow at the time and did not see the point of his asking to go through the cards!

It hardly seems necessary to take up Mr. Piddington's other points since the B.B.C. has now expressed its regret (*The Times*, September 20th) for inadvertently giving the public the impression that the Piddington show was something more than entertainment. That being so, there is no reason to pursue the matter any further. Mr. Piddington keeps on saying "you were our judge." I only wanted to explain that I was not any kind of a judge, but just a participant in a jolly good show.

The matter after all has some real importance because the public should understand that these are not the conditions in which the exciting question of telepathy can be investigated. Any two people who really had such a rare gift would want to test it away from electric wires and crowds of people and in genuinely controlled conditions. And they would certainly not rely on telepathic communication always occurring precisely in a public place at a given time once a week. I hope that without in any way spoiling people's amusement at the Piddington show, which I greatly enjoyed myself, I have done something to counteract the public tendency to believe in witchcraft!]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHEN the gritty and sardonic rasp of Wm. Joyce's voice was heard on the German radio during the war, a whole nation was, for the first time in history, made intimate with a betrayer. We entertained dishonour at our firesides. A character emerged from hearsay and romantic literature into everyday life. It was a salutary experience; one of the paradoxical gifts of science has been to restore the knowledge of forgotten evils to the modern world. Many casuists had worked upon us, as they will in times of religious war, telling us of higher and lower moralities, true and false revolutions: to hear Wm. Joyce was to see the arguments collapse and to feel simple hatred for the man who will destroy his own. Sinister, unfriendly and sadistic, the voice was untempered, it seemed, by any knowledge of the ordinary affections of human beings; the manner was fatally theatrical for a British audience, and left us with the impression of a man fixed in the harsh void of his own vanity and the appetite for power.

Joyce is the dominating figure in Miss Rebecca West's brilliant reports* of the trials of the British traitors during the war, and the anatomies of the characters involved in them. She is an ubiquitous observer and a merciless moralist, pursuing the accidental gesture, the unguarded remark, until it yields its comment on human corruption. She unforgettably creates the seedy atmosphere of treason and unravels, with a mastery of pure story-telling its devious histories. Irony and contempt, checked here and there by sympathy, give a bite to her relentless moral inquiry; and if the irony does not conceal the tension of a violent mind it must be remembered that she is dealing with men who were, many of them, nature's gangsters. To the long accretion of common morality and to the many tributaries of what we call democracy, she seeks to recall the fullness of moral passion. A cooler mind might have shown that the meaning of treason changes and lies partly in history. Fawkes and Casement were both "traitors" but it would be odd to-day to accept the contemporary verdict and regard them just as examples of corruption. Miss West suggests that the decline in religious belief today is at the bottom of the moral anarchy or the pride which creates the traitor; yet religion, at war with the community, has in English history provided traitors by the score, for belief and morals are frequently at variance. At another point, she writes more philosophically:

> The relationship between a man and a fatherland is always disturbed by conflict if either man or fatherland is highly developed. . . . All men should have a drop or two of treason in their veins, if the nations are not to go soft like so many sleepy pears.

But there can hardly be a stronger proof of what may be called a continuing morality than the contempt of the foreign master for his slave; nor any greater humiliation than when the visionary or the psychotic discovers he is a despised if useful instrument, knocked down to the level of the Third Murderer.

The story of Wm. Joyce is enriched by its tortuous Irish background, by the shadows of betrayals and apostasies a generation old, and by the ugly arc light it throws upon the gang life of Fascism. An Amery merely exemplified recklessness and the old story of the black sheep; a Baillie-Stewart displayed a silliness and conceit ("he went about the business of espionage as noisily as a postman") which convinced the Germans he was a counter-spy; a Nunn May, who had the folly to act upon the preachings of some light-hearted scientists, illustrated the hollowness of the pretensions of modern science to special political enlightenment. A career of profound political immorality requires talents that cannot be picked up in a laboratory. Miss West, whose anti-Communism is *exalté*, is rather too drastic with Nunn May who was a sentimentalist, behaving with the traditional folly of the expert and the specialist. His sentence, like some of the sentences on the small fry, she seems to feel, as many others have, was far too harsh. But Joyce is the perfect case for her talent. He was a man fatally bent, at every turn, to his destiny. At the trial, the startling thing was his background and, after that, the wi'd irony of his situation. Both Joyce and his father before him had been insisting to the authorities everywhere in England, grandiloquently, for years, on their British nationality. (A grotesque sidelight: Wm. Joyce, in his early days, used to make his friends sing the National Anthem after his parties). Many Irishmen have two passports; why did Joyce try to play the fool with one?

> He came into court, a tiny little chap with the real Donnybrook air. He was not a very fortunate example of the small, nippy, jig-dancing type of Irish peasant . . . His smile was pinched and governessy. He was dressed with an intent and ambitious spruceness, which did not succeed in giving any impression of well-being but rather recalled some Eastern European peasant newly driven off the land into a factory town and wearing his first suit of European clothes.

But it was at once clear that he was not new to ambiguity: Irish history had formed him and isolated him. As Irish Catholics the Joyces might have been expected to have stood by their co-religionaries in the struggle against England. They did not. They refused to commit that treason and went further. They acted against their natural side, were suspected of being informers and became so hated that their house was burned down. Joyce's father lost two houses in his lifetime, one at the hands of his fellows and the other in London at the hands of his son's. Perhaps, Miss West suggests, one of those gnawing Irish grudges existed in the Joyce family: political masters forget their servants, and the English did nothing for the Joyces who had made, albeit with probity, what Miss West calls "an insufficient inquiry into first causes."

It is one of her shrewd points that Joyce was in love with the obsolete Britain of the pre-Treaty years, and that when he turned to Fascism he desired to build in England the kind of police state he had seen in Ireland in the time of the Black and Tans. He had the Irish love of street fighting and fracas; and, when, after being dismissed by Mosley because funds were short, he invented a more extreme and almost religious form of Fascism, he had completed his equipment as a little Fuehrer, as a vain and power-loving man driven to violent compensations by his personal failures. He repelled people.

Why did he repel? There is a point at which psychological inquiry leads us in circles. Joyce did badly where worse men, with more perilous histories, have done better. Nothing is decided by saying people are neurotic or psychotic; the psychologists have said we are all as mad as hatters. Joyce failed because the majority of the English hated Fascism. It is important to remember this because I detect in Miss Rebecca West a tendency to generalise too freely about the rootless urban man, taken from the land, unsupported by a fixed morality and traditional guidance. A huge number of people come into this category—yet they do not gang up with Fascism or Communism. One must not judge contemporary life by its more vapid public manifestations; the revolt against men like Joyce or any of the gangs rises from inherited experience and private life. Universal experience does not cease to be informative because a man soaks up bad films and listens to the wireless in the evening.

The minor stories of the unhappy members of the British Free Corps are picaresque and extraordinary. Unlikely characters cropped up to enliven the shabbiness of the court proceedings, and they give Miss West irresistible opportunities. There was Denis John the son of a London baker who, as the German machine collapsed, was able to gratify a romantic passion and live the one absurd love affair of his kind. There was the astonishing Miss Francis, the actress, harking back to the days, the fal de lals and the histrionic genre of Lilian Gish, who came to court to help a disingenuous Mr. Black. Her description must be given at length to convey Miss West's eye for comedy in this tragic and seedy world:

> Her lips and cheeks were brighter than paint because of the prodigiously healthy blood behind her thin and fine-grained skin. Her chestnut-gold hair had the strong untroubled lustre of an animal's coat; the springing quality recalled what claims the flesh can make—and they are many—to superiority over marble. But she was also comic. For she was simple as puppies are. She was grieved, as all of us were, at the sight of Mr. Black in the dock, but it was as a puppy who sees its playmate locked in a kennel, and, though a puppy surely suffers, the simplicity of the world it lives in, compared with the complexity of the world in which we live, makes even its suffering a matter for smiles.

Her voice "flowed past the Judge and Jury giving them no more information than if it had been a rivulet of melting ice-cream." And when they asked what she was doing in Germany that she needed Mr. Black's help, she replied, "Why, I was in trouble." This phrase, as Miss West remarks,

> to an English mind limits the range of her possible predicaments to one. The court was suddenly sympathetic. But when she cooed on, softly as a distant dove, "Yes, for two years I was in trouble," it showed its relief cheerfully.

However, being true to Miss Francis did not prove that Mr. Black was true to his country.

Miss West's book is rich in argument and impression and one elaborates the other. She is satirical but on the side of authority, scornful, at times even snobbish about her victims, sizing them up with the drastic wit of an undeceived hostess and yet unexpectedly, surprisingly fair, and even compassionate. No doubt there is a touch of strain and rhetoric in her moralisings. We are not always sure when we hear the words of common sense that the voice is free of the tremor of the extremist. Like many brilliant writers, she has a mind that is too incessantly being made up; it is like listening to doors slamming one after the other through a house. If I could have been an American rebel or a Sinn Feiner, I would have been puzzled to know what her advice to me would have been. But there is no doubt of the people she portrays with such alarming moral verve—the mad, the simple, the frightened, the liars, the shameless, the eccentrics, the conceited, caught in a world that was shabbier and more exacting than they suspected.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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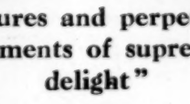

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Dr. Joad belonged to the generation which found in G.B.S. all the arguments to justify its revolt against Victorianism. As a young man, he tells us, he welcomed Shaw's iconoclasm and accepted his alternative philosophy with an uncritical and whole-hearted enthusiasm. A childhood spent largely in hotels and in an atmosphere of extreme conventionality conditioned him to leap with joy when Shaw told him that children owed no duty to their parents except that which the parents earned, that most of the current beliefs about the relations of men and women and parents and children and the glory of war and the duty to resist temptation and go to church and all the rest of it were so many outworn conventions. Joad, in short, fatherless in the physical sense, accepted Shaw as his spiritual father, regarded him as God. In middle life he revolted, and finding a gap where Shaw had been, decided that he believed instead in the more reliable God of the Christian Church.

Moved by a deep piety, and also perhaps by a desire to prove to the world his unique capacity to appreciate G.B.S., Joad wrote a book expounding Shaw's philosophy of the Life-Force. Those who are not trapped into the mere pursuit of happiness may, Shaw suggests, co-operate in the eternal task of re-creating the world. This philosophy of life—for such it is rather than a fully digested and thought-through system—was expressed most impressively and dramatically in the Hell Scene in *Man and Superman*. It is more thoroughly worked out in *Back to Methuselah* which was published at the end of the first world war when Shaw had reached the chastening conclusion that man would not be saved by Voltairean wit, but needed to recreate and rediscover, if possible, the psychological truths embodied in religious legends whose factual truth was no longer credible. As time passed, however, Joad found this impersonal Life-Force inadequate. A vigorous son, he broke away from his adopted father. Shaw made no effort to retain his self-chosen worshipper.

Dr. Joad is candid enough to admit that the cause of this revolt was not wholly intellectual. Or rather, shall we say, he sees that there were basic differences of temperament and make-up which reject Shaw's attitude to life. He remarks that Shaw was "uniquely" free from all sense of original sin. Here, I think, he is wrong; there are many who do not suffer from a sense of guilt, though fewer, I agree, than some Freudian amateurs imagined when they taught that a modern education in infancy would automatically free us from irrational conflicts. Where Joad is certainly right is in seeing that the extreme austerity of Shaw's form of Life-Force worship was only possible for a man who had no taste for what may be comprehensively called sociability. Shaw really believes apparently that artistic achievement and appreciation, closer relations with one's fellows—love in fine—are childish things we ought to grow out of along with the pimples of adolescence. Those of us who have an ascetic side to our minds—Joad claims nothing of the sort—may at times be attracted to this view. The ideal of contemplation is older than Aristotle. But Shaw fails to give us the vaguest notion what it is we are to contemplate; it is not clear what his Ancients are up to. In brief, for a man who does not like wine or women, and only practises song by his own fireside, the philosophy of inhumanity, of the superman, of salvation through disregarding both pity and fun, may have an unworldly and satisfying appeal. But Joad is quite right that it cannot satisfy one who admits to remaining very susceptible to the temptations of the flesh. No wonder, says Joad, that a man so unsociable is no Democrat! In a sense I think it is true that Shaw's Puritanism is a failure to grow up; he cannot enter into the lives of ordinary people. An Ancient may be what he is because he has outlived folly or because he has never experienced it.

On the basis of this personal story Dr. Joad skillfully manages to pack in a great deal of first-class talk and argument. He omits what is to me a particularly interesting point. Shaw has always detested "Liberals," that is, people who "romanticise," who think, as he might say, that they can make things as they are not by pretending that they are what they want them to be. He liked Webb not so much because he agreed with him, but because he tried to build on facts and allowed no ideas of conventional morality to stand in the way. (That, was theory rather than practice.) Shaw decided, as many reformers have before him, that reform is no good, democracy no good, society no good, because ordinary people are no good. We must find, historically, the Great Man; biologically, if you will, the Superman. He must be without sentimentality or romanticism, and sometimes Shaw seems on the edge of adding, without pity or human kindness. Yet without these human attributes, has he not himself told us many times that all government must be evil? Therefore Shaw vainly seeks his Superman. How can he be above good and evil, above human weakness and yet disinterestedly and ceaselessly devoting himself to human good? Is the contradiction no clear to Shaw's cold and disinterested intellect? If the dictator is above human emotions then he is also below them; if he is not moved by love and pity then why should he strive for human good? Because there is no reply to that question Shaw's attacks on democracy fall flat. Bad and muddled though it is, democracy is the only system even to begin to try to ensure that the interests of the rulers and ruled coincide.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

PURPLE ON ORANGE

Craigavon, Ulsterman. By ST. JOHN ERVINE. *Allen & Unwin.* 35*s.*

This huge volume enables that attractive, perverse, impossible and stimulating ex-Fabian, the well-known Ulsterman, Mr. St. John Ervine, to let off every fire-cracker in his possession. With passionate rhetoric and fierce indignation he here sets down a history of Lord Craigavon's hold on the Ulster Unionists, his personal philosophy, with its hatreds, which are many, and its loves, which are few—all these are set down with malice aforethought, with charity towards none, and with a shrill of excitement that makes the reader feel sometimes that he is at an *auto-da-fé*, and sometimes that he is at one of the great Russian purges in the later Thirties, with Mr. Ervine playing the dual role of Judge Ulrich and Prosecutor Vishinsky. There is much valuable historical detail tucked away in this vast pamphlet, with its unappeasable hates, its melodramatic loves, and its generally blazing invective. There has been nothing like it since the days when Wilson Barrett used to bestride the provincial stage with those plays in which the cloak-and-dagger work was so exciting that even the stalls stood on the seats to cheer.

The theme is very simple. It is the story of how Lord Randolph Churchill's dream of the Eighties —"Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right" —was given reality by the rocklike determination of Lord Craigavon and his noble Covenanters, Carson, Birkenhead, Bonar Law, soldiers, sailors, policemen, business men, and workers, when Mr. Asquith's Government tried to force Home Rule on Ireland in 1912-14. They made a new Thermopylae, anticipated Dunkirk, and, with Lord Craigavon's steadfast determination, built a Protestant and Imperial fortress against which the dark forces of reaction have flung themselves in vain. Lord Craigavon, followed by Sir Basil Brooke, have stood like Horatius, on the drawbridge, stoutly repelling Lars Porsena, whether he came garbed as Mr. Asquith or Mr. John Redmond, as Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. de Valera. If it all reads rather like the history of a Balkan State, written by a member of a Macedonian terrorist gang, it is all glorious, even riotous, and Mr. Ervine must have written it in a perspiration of passionate enjoyment.

Mr. Ervine dislikes practically all Roman Catholics, except Bishop Doyle of Kildare. He loathes little men like Mr. de Valera, Michael Collins, and the priest-ridden fanatics who want to take from Ulster not only its place in the Empire, but its imperturbability, its imagination, its power of logical reasoning, its Cromwellian belief in one's trust in God and a powder kept peacefully dry. He knows how worthless are poor helpless creatures like Mr. Birrell, bemused bureaucrats like the late Lord MacDonnell, spineless politicians like the late Lord Balfour, degenerate sons (though he recovered after the fiasco of the Ulster Hall incident in Belfast) of fine fathers like Mr. Winston Churchill, ignorant pawns of the Fenian Brotherhood like John Redmond, and Fascist beasts like the late Arthur Griffith. He looks upon all intellectuals, especially the staff of this paper, as boneless animals who are not even wonderful. He throws all Fabians into the rag-bag of history. Lord Craigavon may not have had a great mind. He may not have been eloquent. He loved Ulster, Protestantism and children. He knew a renegade—like the late

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Lord Pirrie—when he saw one. He was utterly selfless. He picked that towering giant, Sir Edward Carson, to be the leading marionette whose strings he pulled. He organised superbly. He was a great man, in the sense that Grover Cleveland was a great man. He had no vision of the future, that is to say, but he was a fine boy of the bulldog-breed who forced the British Government to permit Ulster to remain outside the backward and priest-ridden desert that calls itself the Republic of Ireland.

There is an element of truth in Mr. Ervine's case. The clergy have far too much power in Ireland; and they have co-operated with the Republican leaders to reduce their country to the intellectual and moral status of Portugal. They have made it a petty province of the Vatican when it might have been in the mid-stream of civilisation. Education is poor, agriculture backward, public spirit parochial, and a large element of politics consists of deciding how to keep the best jobs away from the infidel. Ulster has a higher rate of literacy, more skilled workers, greater devotion to the British connection, and a gift for producing some of the best of our generals and other fighting men. What Mr. Ervine does not fully explain is why, at least in Ulster itself, the Government can only maintain itself by wide, special powers, jerrymandering the electorate, being as nervous of the Southern Irish as the United States of Mr. Zilliacus, and, within its own boundaries, as narrow and parochial as Dublin or Limerick or Cork. Ulster may be the province of light and loyalty that Mr. Ervine insists that it is—the Gibraltar of the Atlantic. But, if Mr. Ervine is entitled to live in Devonshire, I do not really see why Mr. Bernard Shaw is not justified in deciding to live in Ayot St. Lawrence.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THE RIDDLING STYLE

The Grasshopper's Man and Other Poems. By ROSALIE MOORE. *Yale University Press. Cumberlege.* 14*s.*

The Lost Son and Other Poems. By THEODORE ROETHKE. *Lehmann.* 6*s.*

Miss Moore, Mr. Auden tells us in his foreword, belongs to a group of American poets, the Activists, who believe that " of the two kinds of meaning in language, the denotative and the connotative, it is the latter which is the genuine poetic meaning." Let us see exactly what is implied by this vague and plausible contention; for it is important, if true. There is a passage in *Hamlet* which, because of the ambiguous punctuation and syntax, has to be taken in one or the other of two very different ways. The actor can say, " He was a man, take him for all in all we shall not look upon *his* like again," or " He was a *man*, take him for all in all—we shall not look upon his like again." He can merely assign Hamlet's father to the class of men before going on to say something positive about him; or he can imply, by his emphasis, that Hamlet's father had all the qualities proper to a man. The older logicians would have called the first use of " man " denotative, the second connotative.

Logic is a dry subject, which few poets bother to study, so it is not surprising that the vocabulary of Miss Moore's contention should be about forty years out of date. The older logic was based on the uses of rhetoric. The newer logic is based on the relations of mathematics and it has handed the idea of connotation over to psychology; for while we all agree on what set of creatures the word " man " refers to, no two of us are exactly of the same opinion about what the qualities proper to a man are. A word's connotation is not as the older logicians appear to have imagined, in some way mysteriously implicit in the word itself but varies for each of us according to our experience of what the word refers to; so it is more properly described, to-day, as the word's range of associations. Let us now translate Miss Moore's contention into the more unpretentious modern terminology; so put, it will become exact and unpersuasive. She believes that a poem gets its best effects not from the strict meanings of the words in it but from their associations for the poet. Too many of these associations will be private and the interest of poems written on this principle is too likely to be solely that of a superior guessing-game.

Nevertheless, in Miss Moore's own case, once one has accustomed oneself to a state of chronic confusion over what she is talking about, one can enjoy occasional brilliant compressions,

> What fish-striking bird dives here,
> And into what skull's eyes?

which would lose something of their lustre if their strict meaning was laid flatly out. I paraphrase what I think the underlying, and unstated, strict meaning is: " This moment of beauty or revelation resembles the lethal dive of a kingfisher into a pool. It is as if my eyes were pools for the bird to pierce with its sharp beak. The beak withdrawn, there is no longer a living head but only a dead skull. Such flatness always follows such intensity." I think that example of Miss Moore's method is a successful one, because most of us could work the associations out. Too often, however, these lie layer upon layer. This is a wonderful conceit for the conductor of an orchestra.

> And often I see, as framed in a guilt of light,
> The spare hands
> Dealing suns among orchestras,

but the conductor himself is a conceit for something else, and I have not been able to discover for what. Miss Moore writes with a grace that is common among women poets and with a taut, strict line that is not. But her beauties are minor, those of whimsical fancy, delicate half-perception, and warmly cupped sensation, and it seems to me that minor beauties are all her method can produce. Major poetry, as for instance

> My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
> And hope that is unwilling to be fed;

is never afraid of the bald statement. Moral statements of this sort are just what Miss Moore's method does not permit her to make.

Mr. Roethke works forward from some really admirable and straightforward shorter poems at the beginning of his book, first of all about the processes of vegetable growth, and then about the sorrows of ordinary American life, to some longer and more ambitious ones at the end, which have something in common with Miss Moore's riddling style. Indeed, he positively asks riddles:

> If we detach
> The head of a match
> What do we do
> To the cat's wish?
> Do we rout the fish?
> Will the goat's mouth
> Have the last laugh?

To such questions it is hard to suggest any rational answer, though I suppose these lines might be paraphrased, " If we perversely impede some proper function, have we any notion of what a wide and apparently irrelevant set of disturbances we start off—destroying, possibly, everything in us except a basic animal lust! " But I am making a shot in the dark and may have hit a quite wrong target. Yet, largely impenetrable as they are at a first reading, these later poems of Mr. Roethke's have a queer air, which Miss Moore's lack, of belonging, under their disguises, to a familiar tradition; they are involute allegories about the progress of the soul.

Mr. Roethke's earlier and shorter poems are anybody's meat and some of them are very fine indeed. One section presents, in a condensed form, the whole American fable: the three stages of life, the small boy waltzing round the kitchen with a whisky-breathing father, the adolescent battling with lust among the tangy smells of the pickle factory, the grown man aware of life's emptiness in the hygienic office,

> Ritual of multigraph, paper clip, comma,
> Endless duplication of lives and objects.

The whole book has a flavour about it, rather lacking in contemporary British poetry, of the pressure and shabbiness of life as it is ordinarily lived. Thus Mr. Roethke's nostalgias and con-

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demnations are not simply common literary form. They have a certain moral weight:

> Yet when I heard the drunkards howling,
> Smelled the carrion at entrances,
> Saw women, their eyelids like little rags,
> I said: On all these, Death, with gentleness, come down.

From this book, as also from Miss Moore's, our own younger poets might learn something. Both use personal material in an unaffected way (however oblique sl e may be, Miss Moore is not pretentious) and present themselves, without making a fuss about it, as the sensitive ordinary person. Miss Moore's tricks, indeed, and Mr. Roethke's riddles are not to be set up for imitation. Yet life is a riddle; and it is as well to be reminded, sometimes, that the construction of a poem is a tricky business. G. S. FRASER

IRREGULAR WARFARE

Eastern Approaches. By FITZROY MACLEAN. *Cape.* 15*s.*

Having an army which was probably unique in the last war for its keenly felt social structure, it was perhaps natural that the British at war should have staged an inordinate number of side-shows. Many stalwart individualists tended to be impatient of the indiscriminating discipline of war. Some of them accepted it, of course, with unrivalled distinction—as anyone who reflects upon the astonishing record of such units as the Guards Brigade will know. The less orthodox spirits (and from time to time the more impatiently ambitious) preferred to be left to their own devices. And there grew up the racy and rumbustious company of irregular groups and "private armies" which made hay of the King's Regulations, undertook and sometimes carried out the forbidden or the impossible, gathered risks with both hands, dazed, dazzled, and stung the enemy—or else, occasionally, amazed by their irresponsibility and incompetence—and gave the people at home a glimpse of romance and heroism which was sometimes richly true and sometimes not. The peak and triumph of these military diversions were reached in the Desert War, and by none with more distinction than the Long Range Desert Group and the Special Air Service before its founder, David Sterling, was taken by the Italians.

These private wars were above all the war of the old school tie. Their founders and fighters, some of whom won a deserved reputation on both sides for toughness and audacity, were men with a *milieu* and *mystique* of their own. They obtained their military establishment, their stores, directives, and recruits, by a system of personal acquaintance with the right people at G.H.Q. which could have existed in no other army. It would be impossible to explain this to an unenlightened foreigner who had yet to understand that the Empire was founded on the playing fields of Eton and has been run by the right people ever since. Brigadier Maclean, whose adventurous life is an illustration at the highest level of what has been called the "old-boy network," provides the explanation in five hundred competent and at times exciting pages. It is not too much to say that this book is an important contribution to understanding how British society works.

When the war broke out Maclean was in the Foreign Office. He left that to join up by the only possible loophole—entry into politics—and went into his father's regiment, the Camerons, as a private. Hearing of this deception, the Foreign Office demanded his body, whereupon, with a stout-heartedness which Sir Richard Hannay himself could not have bettered, Maclean got himself elected forthwith as the Conservative Member for Lancaster. Balked of their prey, the Foreign Office then gave up. Maclean was soon commissioned and on his way to the Middle East. When he got to Cairo, he "took a taxi" to Secret Service headquarters. But the Secret Service had nothing much for him; and he was about to joint his regiment in the desert when he "ran into David Sterling . . . whose brother Peter, then Secretary at the Embassy in Cairo, was an old friend of mine." David Sterling asked him to join his newly formed Special Air Service. The chapters which follow, describing what happened then, are perhaps the best in the book. This little unit, working with the incomparable Long Range Desert Group—men who knew the Desert with an almost Arab fidelity—was in the habit of steering jeep-borne southwards into the empty quarter on the flanks of the armies, to emerge hundreds of miles to the west, strike swiftly on an unsuspecting enemy column or airfield, and disappear into the rocks and rufous wilderness before counter-attack could overwhelm them. These were operations which will receive their small bright mark upon the lifeless page of military history.

This is the middle part of the book. The early part, in which the author—then a member of the British Embassy in Moscow—made three or four alarmingly uneventful journeys to Central Asia, seems by comparison little more than a make-weight. Half a chapter of commonplace about Samarkand and Bokara (prefaced, of course, by Flecker) seem a poor reward for toiling with the author across dreary leagues of Asian railway. What Maclean did that was really important to the war, and justifies some of the somewhat extravagant claims made for this book, comes out in the third part. Left after the great advance of 1943 with nothing to do, Maclean "went to see Rex Leeper, an old friend from Foreign Office days, and now His Majesty's Ambassador to the Greek Government then in exile in Cairo." A day or two later he was sitting in a plane bound for London, where Mr. Churchill asked him to go to Yugoslavia; and very soon after that, Captain promoted to Brigadier, he was dropped by parachute into Bosnia. Courage and initiative, together with the old school tie, had done the trick again. There follows an account of Brigadier Maclean's adventures as the head of the allied mission to the Yugoslav Army of National Liberation.

It would be a pity if the publishers' tendency to confuse their author with a John Buchan hero, kilt and all, should obscure the efficient and hard-headed way in which Brigadier Maclean carried through this difficult and tiring mission. Maclean found a British liaison organisation which was well enough informed on what was going on in Yugoslavia but which lacked the influence to move the Foreign Office or the High Command. Armed with Churchill's determination, springing from a typical mixture of romance and realism (and conceived during his visit to Cairo early in 1943), to support the Yugoslav insurrection, Maclean made short work of scruples in the British hierarchy. The partisans were luckier than they knew. Their new British liaison officer was able and intelligent, he understood at once that the partisans were the only military force in Yugoslavia worth supporting and that they would win their war whether we supported them or not: he possessed, incomparable advantage, a direct line of approach to the P.M. and to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. What was decisive in what he did was not to tell the High Command about the partisans—their files had more than enough information already—but to see to it that the High Command acted upon the information that they had. This he proceeded to do with energy and outstanding success.

Part of these chapters is an implied justification for the British decision to transfer their support from the Chetniks to the Partisans. He pointed out to the Prime Minister, he explains, that the Partisans would in any case exercise decisive political influence in Yugoslavia after the war, and would probably want to found a new Soviet State.

> The Prime Minister's reply resolved my doubts.
> "Do you intend," he asked, "to make Yugoslavia your home after the war?"
> "No, Sir," I replied.
> "Neither do I," he said. "And, that being so, the less you and I worry about the form of government they set up, the better. That is for them to decide. What interests us is, which of them is doing most harm to the Germans?"

There are interesting passages of personal observation at close range of Tito and the other partisan leaders, though the treatment of the partisan movement as a whole is sketchy and superficial. Upon the inner history of the British-Yugoslav partnership, however, the book is a disappointment: perhaps necessarily, for most of the papers, no doubt, are still secret. Yet it would be ungracious to carp. This is an adventure story, and a very good one too. BASIL DAVIDSON

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suburb in the last years of the War. It is an anti-Semitism still inchoate, confined to threats and whispers, to assurances that the boys shan't return to find "Kikes" in their jobs, to occasional beatings up or damage to property by gangs of corner boys. For respectable suburbanites, it is an elaborate semi-fantasy of violence that fills the void in their materialist lives, and supplies them with a much needed personal Devil to explain the recessions and depressions that appear to descend like thunderbolts upon them, depriving them of automobiles and refrigerators and throwing them on to the bread-line. With the Christian Front in action, however, and Father Coughlin on the platform, there is a vague feeling that all this may mean more, may in fact be a political force of importance, if and when it is needed. This muddled atmosphere, ridiculous and childish, yet serious and real, Mr. Miller conveys with a precision that reveals his own clear appreciation of the social forces that lie behind the fog.

Against this background is set the small personal horror of what happened to Mr. Newman, of how by mere chance he was cast out from a society, subservience to which had made him a pathetic automaton, and of how, in this frightening isolation, his humanity emerged and grew. Mr. Newman, a self-important, small business executive in his middle forties, is a brilliantly executed picture of the "little man." "Little men" as we see daily in the press are usually an excuse for muddled thinking and shoddy sentiment, but Mr. Miller uses the same figure for opposite ends. Our sympathy is not asked for the conventional shell, but for the person who has taken refuge behind it. The author has conceived the tragedy from his heart, but has never for one moment allowed it out of the control of his head. It is for this reason, perhaps, that his hero recalls so frequently the greatest of all "little men" in English fiction, Leopold Bloom, and much of the spirit of *Focus* is contained in that famous scene in *Ulysses* in which Bloom puts forward the gospel of love. Mr. Miller preaches the same gospel, for, through isolation and persecution, his hero's careful insulation of cotton-wool conventionality falls away, and he finds in turn sexual courage, the power to express human affection, and social duty.

The plot is so neat and logical that one hesitates to reveal it. Something may be said, however, that will not rob the reader of the freshness of the book's development. It is Mr. Newman's particular pride and his especial use in the world of commerce that he has a very sharp eye for racial physiognomy; as personnel interviewer, he has brought the task of politely refusing employment to Jewish applicants to a fine art. His eyesight, however, is failing and it has become essential that he should procure glasses, but by a hideous irony his appearance in spectacles is unmistakably Jewish. From this freak of fortune comes the whole tragedy, he loses his employment, his social status; no self-effacement can help him any longer to "fit in." Driven to seek work in a business where non-Aryans are employed, he meets a Miss Hart, whom he had previously refused a job despite her protestations that she was Episcopalian. It emerges that she, like him, is pure Aryan, though looking Jewish. The scenes by which this couple are united in their pathetic isolation are some of the best in the book, and Newman's realisation that he had found in her a "a long cherished fantasy" even when he still thought she was Jewish, is a turning point in his redemption. The denouement, in which he walks alone to take his place with the race whose suffering he shares, is as moving as it is logical.

The Dark Peninsula concerns a group of English army officers and men stationed in a small South Italian port during one of the lulls in the Allied advance on Rome. The anguish, doubts and self-torments of these men are unrelated to external events, though the suspense and frustration of the war outside is always there. The general conception of this scene is most vividly conveyed. The male characters—particularly the colonel, a brutal, divided, sentimental, homosexually romantic humanist—are at once complex and horribly credible. The author deals with "clever" characters cleverly. His understanding of the vague ever-shifting network of emotional criss-cross, which makes up the inter-relationships of neurotics when they are allowed a breathing space in times of physical violence, is exact; but I felt all the time that the work was out of his control and this, with a difficult, clever book, is very dangerous. The fevers of the sick room—mental and physical—are legitimate, even valuable, sources of artistic inspiration, but the mind that assesses them must be sharp and cold; unfortunately, in contrast to Mr. Miller, Mr. Frost conceived with his head and then allowed his nerves and feelings full sway. He has aimed very high for a first novel—to weave the texture of changing emotion within an objective framework. There are moments when he succeeds most beautifully, but he still carries too heavy a load of unassimilated influences—*The Waves*, Auden, the Caroline poets—and this excess equipment of feeling and culture leads him too often to mar his best passages with "sensitive" and "beautiful" writing of the most vulgar kind. "Mulholland had first come to the town on a day too early with spring"; "if we could only speak properly—speak to that carved and curious skull, which is surely Italy"; "The thick oils of his voice apparently lubricated no triumphant machinery of an ending"—such phrases make one sceptical about the greatness of the dead poet "A" whose influence hangs so strangely over the characters in the book. Nevertheless, when Mr. Frost is not too assertively "aware," his work is often informed with real poetry.

ANGUS WILSON

VISIONS OF BRITAIN

Somerset. By SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER.
Essex. By PHOEBE FENWICK GAYE.
South Wales. By TOM RICHARDS. *Paul Elek.* 15s. each.
Recording Britain: Volume IV. *Oxford.* £5 5s. for four volumes.

There can never before have been so many books dealing with the counties of Great Britain. Almost any bookshop can produce volumes from at least eight different series. The old "Highways and Byways" and the re-issued "Little Guides" stand side by side with the "Vision of England"—a new series edited by Clough and Amabel Williams-Ellis.

All these books are indeed various but they are also rather alike. Nearly always the illustrations consist of rather romantic photographs printed a little too darkly in order to emphasize the beautiful texture of a decayed wall or to create dramatic shadows in a scene which without them would be commonplace—what a superb liar the camera is! In the texts also there are resemblances. Nearly always we are told that the geology of a district is of great importance—and then no more about it. Nearly always we read that agriculture is the chief industry of Middleshire—and nothing further on that subject.

But if "Vision of England" has a bias which is literary rather than scientific or economic this is the bias which the series was meant to have. These books are by established authors who have been asked for "their impressions of, and their personal associations with" some particular county, and the resulting essays, though sometimes hesitating a little awkwardly between reminiscence and information, are well-written and agreeable to read.

Miss Townsend Warner writes brightly of Somerset. She finds that old manor houses couch blinking behind yew trees, philosophic as tabby cats, or are worn like family jewels by shy, sly, gentle rivers; but her "atmosphere" though at times rather excessive is the result of acute observation. In Bath Abbey she sees an inscription: "Evan Lloyd, of Pengwerne, Esq." "In that compact assertion what a mountain of Welsh pedigrees!"

Miss Gaye is a less atmospheric writer though equally observant and sensitive to the character of her surroundings. Essex is not—as Somerset is—an acknowledged beauty, but its lovers find in it the superior fascination of *la belle laide*. Miss Gaye finds particular pleasure in thinking about Anglo-Saxons and looking at the flowers in country gardens, but she deals courageously and justly with that fourth part of the county submerged under London's overspill. "Southend," she says, "is by no means so bad as certain highbrows like to paint it." She praises Essex but admits Liverpool Street station is a daunting approach to it.

Mr. Richards hardly bothers with "atmosphere." He writes to persuade English readers of the Welshness of Wales. He writes with a sort of irreverent sympathy of the Gorsedd and eisteddfodau, of Dai "sad and lonely on the corner of Pandy Square," and of the wealthy retired milkmen who build villas on Cardigan Bay. He admires—as who doesn't?—the coast of Pembrokeshire but calls it "holiday country." For him much more than for the two ladies it's the people that count, not the place.

Three artists illustrate these three authors. Mr. Kirkland Jamieson's Somerset is pleasant but a little vague, Miss Diana Vernon has an unadorned topographical style well adapted to the solid charm of Essex architecture, Miss Eldridge's drawings of South Wales are so little particularised that she sometimes fails to tell us what castle or stretch of coast she is depicting. Unfortunately the editors—or the publisher—have hedged over the illustrations, and by calling in the photographer to supplement the draughtsman have destroyed the unity of the books.

No photographer has had a hand in the handsome volumes of "Recording Britain," the fourth and last of which has now been published. Instead each volume reproduces a hundred or more wartime drawings and watercolours of buildings then thought endangered. In this volume, as in its predecessors, one can study the various styles employed by contemporary topographical artists. There is the elegant architectural draughtsmanship of Mr. Charles Knight, well suited to elegant Brighton; there is the considered innocence of Miss Barbara Jones and Mr. Ruskin Spear, well suited to the naive architecture of temperance halls and home-made classicism. There are some rather too watery watercolours by members of the R.W.S. and others—among them its president Mr. Russell Flint. There are dryly decorative delineations of the iron railings of Bath by Mr. Clifford Ellis. The reproductions, which are mostly in two colours from offset half-tone blocks, in some cases elaborately etched, give all these pictures a certain demure, brownish sameness. The notes by Mr. Arnold Palmer show him to be one of our best topographical writers.

Here then are four more books on British topography to join those already on the booksellers' shelves. If we do not know the beauties of our own country by this time it must be our own fault. All four books are creditable. No. This sounds grudging. All four books are good. But it is possible to imagine books which go a little deeper than these, which attempt a little more in the way of interpretation and analysis. What a universal genius would be needed for the perfect guide book! Geo-morphology, agronomy, history, ecclesiology, sociology and sympathy; taste, accuracy and a good prose style. No one is likely to claim all these skills and knowledges, but our topographical books would often be improved if the writers attempted to add more of them to their equipment. STEPHEN BONE

BEE IN BONNET

Alexander I of Russia. By LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY. *Williams & Norgate.* 16*s.*

Alexander I is the most interesting, though not the greatest, of the Tsars. He was the only monarch who proved a match for Napoleon; yet in later years he was repeatedly outwitted by smaller men. He was the only liberal at the Congress of Vienna, but also the most ruthless and unscrupulous diplomat. He was timid and brave, intellectual and a mystic, an idealist and a tyrant. He exasperated Napoleon who called him "a Greek of the decaying Empire"; and he also exasperates Mr. Harold Nicolson who, in his bluff British way, writes him off as a schizophrenic with depressive mania. It would be impossible to write a dull book about Alexander; and Mr. Strakhovsky's book is not dull. It tells the main outline of the story in rather a casual way; the best parts are the copious quotations from Alexander himself.

But Mr. Strakhovsky is not really interested in the story of Alexander as Tsar. He bustles through this in order to get to the important part—what happened in 1825 when Alexander is supposed to have died. Though the book has as subtitle, "the man who defeated Napoleon," this is not what concerns Mr. Strakhovsky. Its true subtitle should have been "the man who did not die at Taganrog." The sham-death at Taganrog, and Alexander's survival for thirty-nine years as the holy man Fyodor Kuzmich, these are the things which interest Mr. Strakhovsky and for which all the rest is tiresome preliminary. It is a pity he did not make a whole book out of the mystery of Taganrog. This would have made as good a story as Marshal Ney's thirty years of life after death in America; and nearly as good as the adventures of Louis XVII in nineteenth-century France—not as good, because there were forty-six Louis XVIIs. Whether Alexander I died in 1825 or 1864 is of no historical importance, but of great entertainment value. The evidence is not very convincing; most of it consists of Fyodor Kuzmich denying that he was Alexander I. But since it does not matter one way or the other, one might as well suspend critical standards and take pleasure in a historical mystery. At any rate one can say this of Alexander I: there is no other Tsar about whom so improbable a tale could even be imagined. To disappear in this pointless way, and not even become a genuine mystic, was quite in his character. Certainly, if it really happened, it cured Alexander of all his troubles. Fyodor Kuzmich was an extremely cheerful old man, with no sign of depressive mania; in fact with no mania at all, except that he did not like being taken for Alexander I. A. J. P. TAYLOR

A RECOVERED MASTER

Georges De La Tour of Lorraine. By S. M. M. FURNESS. *Routledge.* 42*s.*

The Language of Painting. By CHARLES JOHNSON. *Cambridge.* 25*s.*

It is difficult to imagine the disappearance even from scholars' cognisance of a superb artist. Carlo Dolci and Caravaggio, those darlings of our grandfathers may not these days enjoy much of a vogue. Yet short of a calamity that destroys not only art criticism but the very works of art themselves, I cannot see all details of them being lost, their names vanishing from the pages of even the most compendious *kunstlexicon* and their grime-encrusted canvases ascribed to small fry of other centuries, lisping in idioms totally dissimilar.

Yet this is precisely what happened to the paintings of Georges de la Tour (1593-1652), the first monograph on whom now appears in English. In his day he achieved great honour not only throughout his native Lorraine, but also at the French court, where Louis XIII, no mean judge, banished all other pictures from his room, in order to offer solitary glory to one of La Tour's, and named the artist "peintre ordinaire du Roy." In 1648 he became a founder member of the "Academie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture". Yet by the middle of the XVIIIth century, references to him are confined to the pages of local histories. By the end of the XIXth all memory of the man, all trace of his pictures have been lost. True, in the Nantes Museum there hung two fully signed canvases of his; but until

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WILLIAMS AND NORGATE

1913 these were given to Maurice Quentin de la Tour, the pastellist (1704-88)—as wild an attribution as one could find in the history of art criticism. Other paintings of his in French provincial museums were given to one or other of the Le Nains, or were just labelled "Anon." Even today, when he is again recognised as one of the great, if not the greatest of the glories of French XVIIth century painting, we know hardly anything about him, and can point with certainty to a bare dozen pictures which bear his indisputable signature or the authentic imprint of his splendid and mysterious style.

At the beginning of the XVIIth century, Caravaggio exercised a dominion over painting that may best perhaps be compared to Cézanne's three centuries later. As a young man la Tour would seem to have gone to Rome, where the streets still echoed with the tumult of the brilliant melodrama that had been Caravaggio's short career. Caravaggio of course had pushed to the ultimate point the possibilities of *chiaroscuro*. In our day *chiaroscuro* finds little favour outside the theatre or the film; but to the XVIIth century its powers were intoxicating. Caravaggio too had pulled down the old-fashioned idealism, and proclaimed a "naturalism" which, if it was to lead through de Hooch ultimately to Meissonier and Frank Dicksee, must have seemed a revelation to the young men of his day. Only one painting of Georges de la Tour has yet been discovered with directly transplanted "Caravaggesque" mannerisms, and that, it would seem, an early work. Characteristically, this painting lacks the very element which we most associate with la Tour's style—*chiaroscuro*, with illumination not from the sun, but by night from candlelight. Caravaggio's Dutch disciple, Gherard van Honthorst, had brought in a fashion for night-pieces, artificially lit, and was nick-named "Gherardo delle notti." But Honthorst's shadows you feel hold nothing more mysterious than a beer barrel or a pair of sagging breasts. With Georges de la Tour, the darkness is not merely mysterious, it is profoundly mystical.

The truth is, la Tour took *chiaroscuro*, "naturalism," and the vogue for still life then growing fashionable, and fused these apparently distinct and mundane elements into a mysticism of his own which has no analogy in painting and finds the nearest one perhaps—extravagant though this proposition may seem—in the poetry of his English contemporaries, Donne, Herbert and Traherne. I do not know whether "naturalism" was a by-product of the counter-reformation affecting only painting but poetry also. Did Traherne or Herbert read St. John of the Cross? All I can say is, by la Tour's "*St. Jérome etudiant dans sa cellule*" (Louvre) I am immediately put in mind of "I saw Eternity the other night": and that again and again la Tour's paintings in general, with their austere passion, their aloof fulfillment of a mysterious moment, their strange reds and yellows bring to my thoughts "I gave to Hope a watch of mine."

This is a highly personal reaction, which others may not share. But few people of sensibility could remain untouched by la Tour's painting. For this reason, not less for the loving thoroughness with which Mr. Furness has compiled it, I warmly recommend this monograph. But I must register a criticism. However vague our knowledge of la Tour's life, it should be possible to arrange the plates in some sort of relation to the artist's development.

Mr. Johnson's *Language of Painting* is written in that jargon which renders the average "art magazine" such intolerable reading. Yet, it tackles sensibly enough the difficult and delicate question of opening intelligent but relatively untutored eyes to the pleasures of appreciation. And when he gets away from the clichés of art criticism, and speaks about the task of the artist, rather than the fatigues of the connoisseur, Mr. Johnson can talk very much to the point. It is a pity however that his illustrations are drawn almost exclusively from the National Gallery and the Tate.

SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

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THE WILD WEST

Red Indian Experiences. By DE COST SMITH. *Allen & Unwin.* 18*s*.

De Cost Smith was twenty when he first saw the Far West in 1884. With his brother Leslie, a year his senior, he had travelled there from New York with the idea of studying the Red Indians of the Sioux Territory. He was a painter; his brother used a camera. In those days the West was still wild. To venture there at all you needed strong nerves, if not courage. From Nebraska to North Dakota and for hundreds of miles to the west of the Missouri River, there stretched a vast wilderness in which the only white settlements were a few mining camps and scattered cattle ranches and a group of forts ringed round the Great Sioux Reservation. Only eight years had elapsed since the annihilation of General Custer and his men at Little Big Horn, and intermittent skirmishing was still going on; not until 1891 were the last important battles to be fought. Of course by no means all the Indians were hostile; probably the majority were neutral or friendly; but even those who had no envy of your scalp could make your hair stand on end. It was not unusual, when you thought yourself alone in open country, for an Indian to creep unseen right up to your back, thus demonstrating to himself, and incidentally to you, how easily you could have been tomahawked. No harm was meant; it was just practice. Hardly less intimidating were the white men, the polyglots of the frontier region. And their games were not so simple. De Cost Smith writes with restraint about the lawlessness he witnessed, being anxious not to exaggerate it, but he does not hide his contempt for the pretty imaginations of recent legend manufacturers. He has this to say about such innovations as the cowgirls on their rearing circus horses:

> Certainly the old West did not lack picturesque qualities, but compared with the well-rehearsed wildness we now behold, it was a trifle provincial, unsophisticated, and not always so genteel. The wildness of the old days was spontaneous and genuine, however. It was not standardised. It lacked the wise supervision and restraint of censors and promoters. Consequently, now and again it overstepped the bounds of good taste.

How long the young painter remained among the Sioux Indians is nowhere explicitly stated, but it was sufficiently long, as the reader discovers, for him to acquire a profound knowledge of their customs and psychology, to learn their language and to study their art, and to get to know personally, and in some cases intimately, such well-known men as Sitting Bull, Rain in the Face, Charging Thunder, Low Dog and Long Dog—to mention but a few. These were the last warriors to defy the Americans. Some of them were destined to end their days as compliant exhibits at World Fairs and Barnum Shows, where they sold their autographs in English and Indian at a dollar apiece. The author's description of his last meeting with Rain in the Face (Longfellow's hero) in a side-show at Coney Island is as sad as the saddest stories in Dickens.

At the end of the last century the Sioux Indians were still a primitive people. Nevertheless their ancient beliefs had for some considerable time been adulterated, if that is the word, by the religion of the white invaders. Missionaries and other less reputable Christian men had penetrated deep into their territory long before those explorers whom we know by name discovered it officially. When Lewis and Clark reached the mouth of the Columbia in 1805 an Indian greeted them in English with the uncommon sentence: "Sturgeon is very good." And De Cost Smith relates his own surprise when he attended a performance of the notorious Pipe Dance and learned that the Master of Ceremonies went by the name of George Fox. Among the excellent illustrations to this book—most of them the author's own work—there is a photograph of Sitting Bull, the Sioux warrior-prophet, who, with the encouragement of a New England lady, set himself up as the High Priest of a new religion, Christian in character, called the Ghost Dance. On one of his fingers can be seen a very large ring. Sitting Bull had possessed himself of this immediately after a proselytizing tour of Quebec, where he had been much impressed by signs of the Papal power. He wore *his* on the *left* hand. There are several other examples in these pages of the naive appropriation of white "medicine" by the American Indians; and, like many imitative actions of the innocent, they embarrass the prestige of experience. The last chapter describes how the Iroquois, an eastern tribe, took over intact, and have preserved to this day the (literal) witch-hunting practices of our Puritan countrymen, the first New Englanders.

Though a book which contains such a quantity of bizarre information could hardly fail to be enthralling, it would be ungenerous to belittle the author's contribution to the magic. He is an artist, and he has ordered his material with an artist's sense of form. He is also witty. The only thing to be deplored is the absence of a map.

MICHAEL RAMSBOTHAM

The Untouchables. By B. R. AMBEDKAR. *Amrit Book Co. (New Delhi) and Luzac and Co.* 13*s*. 6*d*.

Dr. Ambedkar, political leader of the Untouchables gathered in the Scheduled Castes Federation, is also the theoretician of his people and movement. In this book, on the basis of abundant historical and textual research, he poses a novel theory of the origin of Untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar's reasoning is close and logical, and it will be impossible to regard his book as having anything less than the highest importance for his subject. No outline can be given here of his theory, but one may whet the reader's appetite by mentioning that, when he looks for the closest non-Indian parallels to the kind of social extrusion which grew into Untouchability, he finds them in the past of Ireland and Wales.

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